

The YOUTH'S COMPANION *combined with* August 1932
American Boy



COVER PAINTING BY W. F. SORE

"THE RAIDERS," BY JAMES WILLARD SCHULTZ; "TRIUMPH."
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Tierney on the Spot

By

John A. Moroso

HATS off to Tierney, the Jersey Mosquito! In September's detective story, "Tierney on the Spot," the Bonehead takes to the air, and with good reason. High up in a New York skyscraper, living in a veritable fortress, a powerful ring of crooks has its headquarters. Up there, in steel-walled rooms, lurk the Boss, Aleck Buffo, and Ike. And to Tierney has been given the job

of rounding them up. . . . While Bonehead Jim, the Jersey Mosquito, seated in the cockpit of an autogiro, swoops down from the skies, Maggie, his faithful housekeeper, leads a single-handed assault from the ground. Jim armed with guns. Maggie with pies! You'll chuckle—and draw your breath—at John A. Moroso's September story of crook hunting.

Batteries for September

IN the third installment of "The Bench Warmer," by William Heyliger, Dan Crosby is on the mound for State College. There's Christy Ames on the bench, high-tempered and jealous. There's Castlin at second base, loyal to a false cause. And there's Steve Ward, behind the plate, loyal to a true cause. As the team splits wide apart, "The Bench Warmer" marches on toward a fighting climax. . . . In "San Field," by Donald Farrington, you'll meet Peanuts Day, pitcher, and Jumbo King, outfielder. These two are as different as day and night, and out of the difference grows a great story. In September.

Swing Down Adventure's Trail

Fortress on the Plains

WHEN his lieutenant fell, mortally wounded, Transpeter Datto, wise in the arts of war, took command of the battery. In ancient Persian ruins rising above the Mesopotamian plain he barricaded his men against the coming of the Turkish cavalry. Waited, behind crumbling parapets, for the enemy.

Cornell, dead. . . . Big Hagen, major of artillery, on another part of the front. . . . Datto and his handful of men knew that they must face their grim hour alone. They must fight until they could fight no more.

That's the situation you'll face in Allan Swinson's galloping story of the Great War, "The Greater Glory." It's coming in September.

Snow-swept Camp

DEEP in the Arctic wastes, battered by a howling blizzard, Carole Morgan and Old Man Manie pitched a final rest. Somewhere beyond the whipping curtain of white—somewhere in the Barrens—was the goal of their search. Two years ago a party of men had gone into the Barrens and never come out. Carole and Manie, acting for the Royal Canadian Mounted, had promised to find them. You'll understand the North and its ways when you read James H. Hendry's story, "In the Barrens," in September. . . . The same issue brings you another story of hide-out, the red-gold outfit. "A Prize on Hide-out," by Glenn Balch, is a story of dog loyalty, a Morgan home, and a giant mountain cat.

Fascinating Articles

HAVE you ever seen the switchboard of a telephone office? Do you know how a half dozen telephone conversations can travel at one time over one pair of wires? September's science article takes you behind the scenes of your telephone company.

September brings you the first of a series of travel articles that will take you through the Orient—from a raw fish dinner in Japan to the Malay jungles. George F. Pierrot, writer of the Sheriton stories, is the author. In the same issue are the last installment of "The Raiders," the Indian story by James Willard Schultz, and other entertaining features too numerous to mention.

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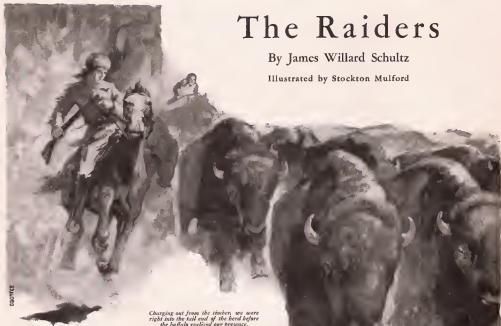
AUGUST, 1932

Number 8

The Raiders

By James Willard Schultz

Illustrated by Stockton Mulford



Charging out from the timber, we were right into the tail end of the herd before the buffaloes realized our presence.

Part One

I'D LIKE to stay on here in Lone Chief's lodge this summer," I said to my father, and perhaps my eyes said more than my tongue.

At any rate, my father laughed a little and then smiled as he looked at me reflectively. His glance had lost none of its keenness in his long years of Indian trading.

"Well, Jerry," he said—only rarely did he call me Eagle Head, as my Pikuni almost-brother Mad Wolf and my other Indian friends did—"well, Jerry, you've earned a summer of the sort you like best. You trapped as many wolves and beavers last winter as any Pikuni in the tribe. I'd like to have you go with me to Fort Benton, but if you want to stay here, it's all right. I'll make you a birthday present of the summer," he added with a twinkle.

I was nineteen on that sunny day in 1875. And although my blood was all white, I was more than half Pikuni at heart. For five years my father and I had been trading with the Pikuni tribe of the Blackfeet Confederacy. We had followed the tribe in all its wanderings, keeping it supplied with trade goods in exchange for its buffalo robes and furs. Now, save for my father, the Pikuni were my people.

My father understood that, and would not urge me to go with him to Fort Benton to take in the final clean-up of the winter, these hundred robes and a like number of wolf and beaver hides. After our talk he went quietly ahead with his preparations, and when all was ready and he gripped my hand in fare-

well, he spoke no word of reproach.

But I realize now, as I recall his somewhat rueful but wholly understanding smile, that he knew well enough why I wanted to spend the summer in the Pikuni camp instead of with him. I had fallen head over heels in love with Pitahki, daughter of Lone Bull, and sister of my twenty-year-old almost-brother Mad Wolf.

And strangely enough, her father encouraged her in it. Many great and rich sailors came to him with offers of whole bands of horses for her, but he always answered: "My daughter is chief of her person—go to her about it."

But these who had laid aside their dignity and done just that had gone away dismayed and angry at Pitahki's short and positive refusal of their offers.

Some time after my father's departure, Little Otter, the proud, handsome son of rich old Three Bulls, asked Pitahki to be his woman. When she said she would not, he was furious.

"You lie!" he shouted. "You are going to be my woman! As Sun sees me, hear me, I tell you that you are going to set up a lodge with me! And with that he slapped her face, and stalked off the way he had come.

Pitahki ran to her father and demanded that he put an end to Little Otter.

"No," Lone Bull answered, smiling. "How many times have I said that you are yourself the chief of your person? I say to you again, daughter, you must yourself avenge the wrong that are put upon you."

And then her mother, Sinapahki, spoke: "What are you, a stone heart, that you refuse one after another these kind, rich, brave ones?"

"I am young," retorted Pitahki. "I have plenty of time in which to become a lodgekeeper, a provider for some man's every want."

"Well said, daughter!" exclaimed Lone Bull. "Remain free as long as you can. Well you knew that to wait upon a man is no light task."

All this I heard; and that evening as I sat upon my couch in the big lodge of Lone Chief, with whom my father and I always lived, I began to think. I had often heard it said that women turned from quiet men to make with rough ones. Perhaps Little Otter's almost unheard-of insult to Pitahki might be the very thing that would cause her to choose him!

Much as I wanted to ask Pitahki to set up a lodge

with me, from very bashfulness, cowardly timidity, I had given her no least hint of my desire. But now, I decided, this very evening, while yet she was angry at Little Otter, while still her cheek was burning from his stinging hand, I would boldly tell her that I wanted her to be my woman. Watching for my chance, I confronted her at last, with pallid face, she came out upon the trail to answer.

"You startled me," she said. "And your eyes, so strangely shunning, what makes them that way?"

"Because they are seeing you, the girl I want." I surprised myself by quickly, fearfully replying. Pitakhi, I have loved you a long time. I want you to be my woman, my only woman. My woman but not my slave. You will not have to provide wood and water for my lodge, nor tan buffalo robes a net in occasion of a leather, for while men do not require that of their women."

"What? You also want me?" she angrily asked. "Gee! I even go for water but someone wants me to be his woman. No! I say, No, I will not be your woman. I am going to remain with my father."

"When I just stood and looked at her, she was so modestly: 'Don't look at me that way. I am your almost-sister, as Mad Wolf is your almost-brother, and we must ever be closest of friends.'"

"Ah! Kingyup! Mafshi! Pitakhi! Ah! Finished! Matters not the really brand! I exclaimed, the strong expression being the equivalent of, I care not what happens to me now. And with that, I turned abruptly from her.

But she came after me, whirled me about, and with arms crossed about me gave me a long fierce kiss—then fled, not on to the river but back toward camp.

She left me breathless, dazed. Never had I been kissed like that. And what could it mean but that she really loved me, and not as a sister either?

STRAIGHT back to my couch in Lone Chief's lodge I went, and all the long evening passed upon my meeting with her, hopefully at times, and again despairingly. Well, I would find early morning opportunity for another lone meeting with her, and then—was up at sunrise and sitting just behind our lodge, waiting for her to appear. I could hear her in her lodge, only forty feet away, talking with her mother, and calling her brother a sheephead and urging him to arise. She came next to some feet, and I told her to get up toward the river with me. She shook her head and hurried back in with her sticks.

"We need water," her mother said. "Get some, Pitakhi."

"Come with me!" Pitakhi pleaded. "I like not to go so long without water trail."

"Well, it is fearsome, the thick brush through which it runs. Come then—hand me that other kettle."

Out they came and passed me, Sinopaki with a small stick in her hand, and I followed. I did not see me. I knew then that I was to have no private talk with her if she could avoid it.

Mad Wolf came out. "His, early rise—have you waited long for me? Well, come," he said, and we went down the river for our morning bath.

All that day and the next Pitakhi avoided me, keeping close by her mother or to one of Lone Chief's other wives. By the end of the second day, she had me in a fine state of mind, angry and desperate. She did not love me or the world not treat me with such indifference. As I sat on my couch, fuming, a runner from Fort Benton brought me a note from my father.

"My father (It ran): Risk please diggings discovered over an Salmon River and I am joining the stampede. No time to come for you. Have placed

\$500 to your credit with J. G. Baker & Co. If I've not sent back by fall, better come in and stop with them until I return. Be smart, be good.

Yr. father,

John Tubbs

Salmon River? A West-side river of Idaho—a long way off. Placer mining. My father was a worker! He would get his share of the gold dust if it were really there. But I was sorry that he had chosen the ranch, for we had a sure thing in the fur trade, and placer mining was always a gamble.

Sitting upon my couch, thinking it over, I decided that if my father did not return by the time roses had faded and furs again became prime, I would myself start on our trade. But now, during these summer months, I would do my possible to make Pitakhi mine.

Just as I had reached that decision, in came good old Two Bears and asked Lone Chief and me to go with him to Big Lake's hunt for a time. His son, Arrow Topknot, was to undergo his vision-seeking fast, and Two Bears wanted him to stay here on an island in the lower lake. Sun Weasel, Wolverine, and Lone Bull had promised to go, with their families, and he wanted very much that we should go.

"When do we start?" Lone Chief asked.

"In the morning."

"Good. Let it be an early start. You women, you heard me; do all that you can this evening toward breaking camp."

"Of course you will go with us," Lone Chief said to me.

Would it! In that small camp of I should surely have my chance with Pitakhi. "Yes, I will go," I answered.

Before sunset of the following day, we made camp on the shore of the lower lake, right opposite the island.

Early the next morning, the women put up a sweat lodge, and Sun Weasel, powerful Sun priest, gathered us men in it and we joined in his prayers for Arrow Topknot, that his vision seeking might be successful. That ended, we built a rude raft for the youth, and then watched him cross upon it to the island and disappear in its little grove of pines. After that, Mad Wolf and I saddled our horses and went west of camp. We soon killed a big bull elk, and brought in the choice parts of the animal.

And still Pitakhi saw to it that I got no chance to be alone with her, and was shy and distant with me whenever I sat with her brother, Lone Chief.

It was in the evening of our second day that the two Bears asked us to kill a couple of buffalo, for he needed the tongues for a ceremonial smoke and feast that he was to give in aid of Arrow Topknot.

There were, we knew, no buffalo in the valley of the lake, and Lone Chief decided that Mad Wolf and I should go eastward until we could make a killing of the animals, and that Pitakhi and her mother should accompany us and help bring in plenty of the meat.

"Ha! Now I will get to have my talk with Pitakhi," I said to myself, and urged that we make an early start.

Had we been able to do that, how different it all might have been! But the pack horses we needed were missing at the morning, and it was past noon when they were found, in the thick brush of a beaver swamp back of our camp.

At last, however, we were off. Mad Wolf and I upon our fast buffalo horses, Sinopaki and Pitakhi upon travois horses, and our pack horses numbering seven.

For a long time we traveled silently, ever shaping our course toward the east. The sun was warm on our backs, and we were glad when in late afternoon my rays lost their power.

"Do people never tire of the sun, Eagle Head, in

that Always Summer country in the south which you talk about?" Mad Wolf asked me.

"They don't get so tired of the sun as we do of the snow," I laughed. "Their grass and their trees are always green, and they have berries ripe upon their bushes when we are shivering in our lodges. Why should they tire of the sun?"

"Any buffalo there?" Mad Wolf asked.

"No. But plenty of deer."

"How happy the people must be, those who live there," said Sinopaki. "Think of it—their sitting in warm sunshine, eating berries, while Cold Maker is making us suffer from his winds and snows."

"I should like to be there during one of our winters," remarked Pitakhi, breaking her long silence. I glanced at her and then looked away again. "What I remember," I said, "I had told my father to Many Houses (Fort Benton), and then we will get into a fine boat and ride down to that Always Summer land, and there remain until summer comes here again." As I finished, I glanced again at Pitakhi, meaningly.

Lo! Looking me fully in the eyes, she smiled, slightly angled her head, then looked another way. Without another word I gave my horse a flick of the quirt and led on far from content that I had been for many a day. Pitakhi's kiss had meant something. She did love me, she would be mine, I felt.

Sun was setting when we struck the north fork of Mill River. We rode on down for some miles, and near dusk, we sighted a large herd of buffalo out on the south plain, about three miles off, heading to the river to drink. It was then too late for us to run them, but they would be near in the morning; so we turned down into the valley and camped for the night in a grove of cottonwoods.

At dawn Baiji awakened me. "Come," he said, "we will ride down and make our killing."

"There is no hurry about it," I answered. "The herd won't have gone far. Let us eat first."

"Eagle Head!" Sinopaki joined in, "your almost-brother is right. The herd may still be in the valley, where you can ride from the timber right in and make a big killing. Go now. Pitakhi said I will come on later to help you butcher your kills. There in my parlance is permission; take sense of it and eat as you go."

So we rode away. Ah, if we had only helped the women saddle up and insisted that they accompany us then!

MAD WOLF and I headed down the valley, keeping in the shelter of the thin bolts of timber as much as possible. We came upon the buffalo where we had expected to find them, about three miles below camp. Chasing out from the timber, we went right into the tail end of the herd before they realized our presence, and at the first reports of our rifles they scattered out, only to merge again in a mighty rush for the plain. We selected only the best of the young rumpers; the remainder they were, the more fat they carried. Our horses brought us up close; we fired, always into the animal's hump; and then, without another glance, knowing that it would soon fall, we sought other fat ones. As we did not want more meat than our pack horses could carry, I killed only three of the buffalo and then brought my horse to a stand. Mad Wolf pulled up too.

"How?" Sinopaki asked.

"Three fat ones."

"Five, my kills."

"Enough, more than enough for us," I said.

We rode back to the camp, dismounted, sharpened our sharp knives, and soon had it skid off and its meat out on convenient porters for packing. Nor did we forget to eat out the all-important tongue.

We hatched a second cow, the while looking for the women to appear, wondering why they were so late. Then, while cutting up the meat of a third cow, we became so uneasy that we mounted our horses and rode up into the hills to look for them.

Which we had made camp, and Mad Wolf exclaimed: "Our pack horses, the women's travois horses! They are not in sight!"

"Probably gone up onto the plain to get away from the fire," I answered.

Faint wisps of smoke were rising from our camp in the little grove and, pointing to them, Baiji said with relief: "Anyhow, neither and Pitakhi are there, and all is well. We can probably look for the horses and couldn't touch them."

We were both bobbed, and can't have gone far. We will soon find them," I answered.

"We will," said Mad Wolf, shouting eagerly: "You lay eyes in there! We are hungry—give us some food!"

No answer.

That was strange. Mad Wolf's quarry suddenly did not seem to be so hard to get, and he had the little clearing in the grove—and came to a sudden stand, staring wide-eyed at what we saw.



"Don't look at me that way," she went on more gently. "I am your almost-sister, and we must be friends."

Shinopahki lay there dead! Flat upon her back beside the smoldering fire. Pitahiki was sobbing in sight.

"Pitahiki!" we shouted loudly, frantically. "Come to us!"

No answer.

With heavy hearts, we searched the adjacent graves, and the thickets of rosehuck and willows, every moment dreading what we might come upon. But we found nothing.

"Not dead, my sister! One of the enemy has taken her." We-yeed, he raised a hand to the sky and cried: "Oh, Sun! Oh, powerful Above One! Pity me. Help me to find and rescue my sister! Help me to find and kill the killer of my mother!"

IT OOD grieved for the passing of Shinopahki. Light-hearted, kindly, tireless, she had always mothered me, had always been doing something for my comfort. And there she lay, cruelly murdered, dead from a blow of a war club.

Yet, even so, her fate might be more merciful than that of Pitahiki. When I thought of proud, beautiful Pitahiki and the scorn mercy her enemies would show her, something froze within me—and then the next moment I was burning up!

"Mad Wolf, almost-brother, listen!" I cried. "As Sun sees us, we will never rest until we have made these raiders pay for all they have done this day!"

And raising again his hand, Mad Wolf promised. "You heard him. Sacred One Above. As he said, so say I!"

We rode to the head of the bottom, where we had last seen our horses, and from there the trail of them was plain; the enemy had driven them westward. We followed, grim-mouthed.

After a couple of miles, we came upon a bright-hued woven grass mat that they had laid. Within it were a woman's buckskin gown, a pair of small, slender moccasins, with the soles and uppers all of one piece, and a smaller sack containing two or three pounds of roasted camas. Proof enough that a woman had lost that sack. And she was a member of a West-side—west of the Rockies—tribe; for those were West-side moccasins, and roasted camas were exclusively a West-side food. That a woman was a member of the party meant nothing; women of all tribes occasionally accompanied their men upon the war trail.

We rode on a mile or two further, until we made sure that the war party was heading for Little Inside Lakes, from which ran several trails over the Backbone, down into the West-side country. We were supposed to attack with the West-side tribes. Why, then, this cruel raid upon us? Mad Wolf and I could only guess at reasons.

"At any rate," I said finally, "we can't possibly overtake this party of raiders with our horses spent by buffalo running."

"True! True!" Mad Wolf agreed. "We can only turn back and do that which we have now to do. But, oh, they shall cry! cry! cry! because of this that they have done to us!"

WE returned to our looted camp, and I hatched poor Shinopahki's travails to my horse, and lashed her body on it. Then we set off, at a pace suited to my double-burdened horse.

As we at last neared the midnight-darkened ledges of our camp, Sayi said to me: "Eagle Head, I can not trust my voice—do you give out the sad news!" Lightly sleeping Lame Bull had heard our approach, and came out. At once he sighted the bundle on our travails.

"Eagle Head, Mad Wolf, what has happened?" he asked.

"While we were out after buffalo, a West-side war party raided our camp, killed your woman, ran off your daughter and your horses," I shortly replied.

His three wives within had awakened too, and now they came running out, waiting for their dead. But they had been four sisters, and Shinopahki had been the youngest of them. The three had always dearly loved her, and great, too, had been their love for her daughter Pitahiki, the only girl in Lame Bull's lodge.

Came hurrying to us the occupants of the other lodges, some of the women at once joining in the wailing, the men vainly trying to learn what had happened. With mighty voice, Lame Bull demanded a short time of quietness, and I told all that we had done, all that had happened to us. Then we men folk gathered in Sun Wenden's lodge for a council, leaving the women to prepare the body for burial.

In low, sorrowful murmurs, Two Bears and our other friends spoke their sympathy, and then Wolverine put the question that was uppermost in my own mind. "And now, my friends," he asked, "what, think you, shall we do?"

"Myself, I return to Cutbush River, and prepare to seek the killers of my women, the stealers of my daughter!" Lame Bull fiercely exclaimed.

"And we go with you," said Sun Wenden.

"Yes," agreed old Two Bears. "Useless now to remain here, for even though my son, out there on the island, were to obtain a vision it would be of no force now."

"Ah. Then we pack up and go, as soon as the women have placed the poor dead one upon her last resting place," said Wolverine.

So it was decided.

AT dawn, the women were building a scaffold of poles in the stout branches of a near cottonwood tree. They finished it, hoisted upon it the body of the murdered one, wrapped in many a blanket and buffalo robe, and lashed it in place, along with her various belongings that she would need in the Sandhills, drier aloft of the Blackfoot dead. And lastly, as Lame Bull's order, Mad Wolf killed a horse beneath the grave tree, that shadow might ride upon shadow to the far-off waste.

Then Arrow Topknot, in answer to his father's shouts, came back to us from his island, pale and thin from want of food. At first he was angry at having been recalled, but when he heard what had happened, he agreed that a fast under such unfortunate circumstances would be without result.

Sun had not set when we rode into the great camp at the forks of Cutbush River, where our friends crowded around us in morning sympathy.

That evening as Lame Bull sat in his lodge, staring moodily at the fire, with Mad Wolf and me also sitting in silence, White Wolf, the head chief of the Pikuni tribe, entered. After him, came



Before sunset of the following day, we made camp on the shore of the lower lake, right opposite the island.

other powerful chiefs, Sun priests, and prominent warriors. Lame Bull motioned White Calf to a seat on his left; urged the others to sit as they would; then told Mad Wolf to relate the whole story of what had happened.

When Mad Wolf came to our finding of the grass sack, interest centered on the moccasins. They went from hand to hand, and all agreed that they were of West-side make, but of which tribe none could tell.

"Call us Sahkiah; he will know the make," said one, and I myself went for him.

SAHKIAH was a West-side man, half Pikuni and half Kallipad. But his two wives were Pikuni women, and he lived mostly with us, going only occasionally across the Blackstone to visit his mother's people.

He willingly returned with me to join the circle of us and, having examined the moccasins, announced that they were probably of Kutenai make. But he doubted that the war party could have been of that tribe, for the Kutenai were not likely to break their friendly relations with our Blackfoot tribes. Had we not given them permission to come out upon our plains at any time and kill all of our buffalo that they could use? They would not wish to lose that great privilege. The chances were that a member of another tribe had got the moccasins in some way when visiting a Kutenai camp.

"Of whatever tribe they may be, the members of that war party must be made to cry for what they have done!" Lame Bull exclaimed, turned to White Calf.

"Chief," he said to him, "this I ask of you: Call upon all the hands of

our All Friends Society to go with me to recover my daughter, to punish the murderers of my woman."

Well, let us consider that," said White Calf.

Followed a long silence, broken at last by Sahkiah: "Chiefs, friends, what would a large party, some hundreds of us, accomplish over there? Nothing at all. The girl would be hidden from us, killed perhaps, and they would deny all knowledge of her. I think that it is for me to go across the Blackstone to my Kallipad relatives, and through them learn who the raiders were, where the girl is held. Time enough after that for us all to go over and surprise attack the camp, rescue the girl, and make a big killing of its men."

"What you are, Sahkiah, and generous. Do that for us; it is the one thing to be done," White Calf replied.

Others approved the offer, all, in fact, save Lame Bull, who roared: "No! I say that we go now across and search the camps of the West-siders until we find my daughter. And then, hat how we will make her captors cry!"

"Lame Bull, my friend, be reasonable," pleaded White Calf. "See this as I see it. We can not go over there to war, break our peaceful relations with the West-side tribes, until we learn to which tribe those we seek belong."

"Yes. Yes, Lame Bull, look at it that way," Sun Wound urged, and ah-ah-ahs of approval were loudly voiced by others.

Then Mad Wolf pleaded: "Father, be calm, he pleases; I shall go across with Sahkiah, if he will have me, and do all that I can to aid him."

"Yes, I am pleased that you will go with me," said Sahkiah.

Lame Bull sighed heavily, knocked the ashes from his big stone pipe bowl and gave the word for dismissal of the gathering: "Kyi! Itahkisi!—There! It is burned out."

And one by one the members of the council arose and silently left the lodge.

Said I, when the door curtain had dropped behind the last one: "Mad Wolf, I am going across with you and Sahkiah."

"Yes. Of course. I knew that you would," he answered.

"**WHEN** do you start?" Lame Bull asked the next morning.

"As soon as we can get a Sun priest to give us a sweat lodge," answered Sahkiah.

"Ah. Ask it of Red Bird's Tail, His Elk Tongue Pipe is powerful," Lame Bull replied, and passed on, sighing heavily.

Red Bird's Tail readily agreed to give us a sweat lodge, and ordered his women to put it up. Then, while we were awaiting its completion,

came stalking over to us Little Otter. "I am going to accompany you in your quest of your sister," he said to Mad Wolf.

"No. You cannot go with us," my almost-brother shortly replied.

"But I must go, must help you find her, for she is to be my woman."

"Is not."

"She is! I told her so."

"She said no, and you slapped her face."

"The slap was nothing. I am going with you; I am going to have her if she is alive."

Said Sahkiah dolefully: "Little Otter, I am the leader of this search, and we are to be but three. You can not go with us. So cease bothering us and go your way."

"Ah! Ah!" he angrily exclaimed. And then, glaring at me, he growled: "You, Eagle Head, I saw you kiss her! You will not kiss Pitahki again—she is to be my woman." And with that stalked off from us.

Sahkiah smiled, Mad Wolf looked at me questioning-ly, and I said: "Yes. I asked her to be my woman. She refused."

"Would that she were your woman, and safe here with us," Mad Wolf answered. And after a pause: "Watch that Little Otter; he is a mean heart."

THE sweat lodge was ready for us, and we passed in to the bath of steam—to come out some time later purified, with the prayers of Red Bird's Tail and the deep-throated adena songs of the Elk Tongue ritual still ringing in our ears.

Solemnly, then, we saddled our horses, took certain of our belongings and were off. Our relatives, our friends, all who were abroad in the camp, silently watching our going, silently praying for our success in our undertaking, and our safe return.

Following up the river valley, we entered the mountains at midday. On and up we rode through the long hours of the afternoon, reaching at last the crest of the range. We creased it to the head of a precipitous canyon running west. There the trail wound downward under a high cliff and presently as we rounded a bend, Sahkiah brought us to a stand upon a jumbled slope and exclaimed:

"There, my young ones, behold it, the country of the West-side peoples."

"Ah! Pitahki! Ah! Ah!—Ah! How very poor!" said Sahkiah.

And I fully agreed with him. Used as we were to the sunny plains and partially timbered mountain slopes of our side of the range, the view westward was depressing enough; range after range of mountains, heavily timbered to their very summits; darkly timbered valleys between them without one stretch of prairie land to relieve their gloom.

We rode on down the west slope in silence. A heavy feeling of foreboding had come over me as I looked at that dark West-side country, and I knew that Mad Wolf, too, felt apprehensive and depressed.

At dusk we came to the confluence of our creek with a larger stream, and there camped for the night, well off the trail. We built no tentlike cooking fire but ate frugally of our dried meat and berry pemmican, and lay down and slept.

Resuming the trail early the next morning, we discovered that a number of horses had gone down it during the night, and uneasily wondered who the riders might be. We soon found the footprints of one of them, in the soft edge of a spring, and knew at

The bullets cut through my capote and shirt and ripped my right shoulder, scarring the flesh.



care that he and his companion were from the plains, for their mountaineers were perfectly suited.

They could not be from our camp, Sahtah and Mad Wolf thought, for there had been no talk of others coming over, and our brother tribes were away in the North. Therefore they must be from one of our enemy tribes, Assinibou, Yanktonais, or Cree, and had sneaked through our country to come over and raid the West-siders, as they often did. They had, of course, gone over horse tracks in the trail. And now, this morning, finding that they had passed us during the night, would they be lying in wait to get us as we came on?

"No," said Sahtah, "we have to go on this trail cut, but we will go with utmost caution, our rifles ready for use."

Traveling through heavy timber with the expectation of being ambushed is no fun. Sahtah leading, and I at the rear, all three of us with rifles in hand, eyes latent upon the trail and timber ahead, we proceeded slowly, haltingly, during the to me intolerable morning. And so, at noon, neared a fork of the trail. The north fork, Sahtah told us, went to a big lake only a short ride off that was a favorite camping place of the West-siders.

When we reached the forks, we found that the party ahead had turned up that north fork. Why, we could not make out. We guessed that they knew that the lake was a favorite place of the West-siders, and hoped to find some of them there.

"At any rate," said Sahtah, finally, "now we have the big trail to ourselves, and can ride fast. Before set of sun, I feel sure, we shall sight the lodges of my relatives. Come, we go."

I was still the rear one. As I was passing the sharp turn up the north fork of the trail, a gun was fired at some little distance up it, and I let out a yell of surprise and pain, for the bullet from it cut through my capote and shirt and ripped the skin of my right shoulder, searing the flesh under it.

"Hain!" Sahtah shouted, and Mad Wolf yelled, "Eagle Head! Are you wounded?" as they checked their horses to turn back to me.

"Only shoulder cut," I answered.

"Come on then! Hurry! before the others are at us," Sahtah urged.

AND we flew on down the trail until we came to a ford of the river and, crossing it, dismounted in the brush to await the coming of the enemy. I was glad that I could handle my rifle as well with my left hand as with my right—could in fact, do most things equally well with either hand.

We waited a long time, but the enemy did not appear. It became evident that they were not following us; doubtless because they feared that we, in turn, might ambush them. But why had they not ambushed us away back on the trail? And why, at last, had they fired only one shot, and that one at the instigation of Sahtah, our leader?

"Perhaps they had 'only one gun,'" Mad Wolf offered.

"How and arrow days passed before you were born; all men now have guns," Sahtah replied.

"He who wounded me may not have been of the party ahead of us, but some lone enemy," I suggested.

Sahtah shook his head. "Useless to further talk about it; we shall never know who fired at you."

My shoulder wound had become intensely painful, and Sahtah offered to doctor it. We went to the river, and while Mad Wolf stood guard, Sahtah stripped me to the waist, bathed the wound, then led me to a balsam tree, and pricking its wary excrescences, smeared the torn skin and flesh with the thick sap exuding from them. The effect was soothing; more so when he cut a strip from my shirt tail and covered the wound with it, the sticky balsam holding it in place.

Mooning again, we rode on as rapidly as possible. Near sunset, we came out upon a long prairie, and the

trail we were following ran into a larger one. We followed it, and at deep dusk of the evening, we sighted the faint, reddish glow of a number of lodges pitched at the edge of a lake.

"Ha!" exclaimed Sahtah. "My young ones, be glad. Soon shall we eat, and smoko, and upon comfortable couches rest." And with that, he quickened his lead, raising a song of his mother's people.

WHEN we drew near the lodges, people came hurrying from them and surrounded us, exchanging greetings with Sahtah in a language that seemed to Mad Wolf and me all harsh tongue clickings and spattering explosive of breath.

"Fox Head, my cousin, invites us to make his lodge our lodge," Sahtah told us.

We dismounted, and the women of the lodge carried in our belongings. We followed the old and I were signed to occupy a couch to the north of the fireplace. Sahtah and our host, upon the latter's couch at the rear of the lodge, continued their spattering talk. Meanwhile, the two women began brooding some elk ribs.

We noticed that Sahtah was growing excited. Soon he turned to us.

"My young ones," he said, "not easy is to be our search for Pitahki. Know that a war party of our brother tribe, the Kains, came over the Backbone, attacked a camp of the North Kutana, killed four of them, and got away with a large band of their horses. Then war parties of the North Kutana went across the Backbone to obtain revenge. Needless to say, one of those parties of riders that killed Sinopahki and captured Pitahki."

Mad Wolf and I nodded silently.

"You can see how this affects us," Sahtah went on. "Though the Kutana people have ever been friendly with me, I would not now dare go into their camps in quest of Pitahki. To the relatives of those killed by the Kains, I should be one of their hated kind—to be killed at sight."

"Then what are we to do?" I asked.

"Go spy upon their camps; if we see my sister, night ride the lodge in which she is held, kill her captor, and make off with her," Mad Wolf proposed.

But Sahtah was talking again with his cousin. I then turned back to us, with a satisfied "Ah!" and a clap of hands, he said:

"Say also, my cousin, that the South Kutana tribe refused to join in the war parties going against our tribes, the chief declaring that they had no come to do so; that they intended to remain upon friendly terms with us and, this coming winter, again move out upon our buffalo plains. Now, my young ones, I think we can safely go then to the South Kutana and through them, one particularly, Red Horn, learn all that we want to know about the North tribes."

(Continued on page 35)



"Oh, Sam!" cried Mad Wolf. "Oh, powerful! Above One! Help me to find and rescue my sister!"



I DON'T believe I've witnessed a more sorrowful sight than the starved, bedraggled cattle day after day languishing in our hundred cabins in the wild Salmon River country that late autumn day. Doubtless he had been brought into the mountains during the summer with a herd of sheep, and had lost himself as the land left its summer range.

You could count his ribs as far as you could see them, and the angles of his high-shoulder frame seemed to be doing their best to kick against his shaggy, matted coat. The only things about him that looked still alive were his large brown eyes, and they were pleading for kindness as he came slowly through our front gate.

Dad, who happened to be standing in the cabin door, took one look at him and exclaimed, "Hide-rack!" From then on, Hide-rack was his name.

At the sound of Dad's voice, Hide-rack stopped doubtfully and attempted a weak flick of the tail. Well, that got me. I've just sixteen now and I've always loved dogs.

"Dad, he's about dead," I said, and walked forward. Hide-rack sat down. I crouched gently, patted him, and picked him up. He was as light as a feather. Talking soothingly to him, I carried him into the house while Dad got a plate from the cupboard and fed him some soft scraps. He pebbled them down eagerly and barked for more.

"No more now, old fellow," Dad said. "You've got to go on to the creek for a while, till you're back in eating form. You've had a long layoff."

And that's how we met the dog that grew to be famous in the Salmon River country little of two years. But that's my story, and I've got to be careful not to get ahead of it. I want you to know just how he happened.

With the food we gave him, Hide-rack grew like a weed. Before the snow had begun to melt in the spring, he was as fat and dicker as a bear cub, and had begun to follow Dad and me in the trap lines.

He had his hand in the corner of the cabin and was the first one up every morning. He would rise, stretch his big body, then with a joyful bark leap into my bunk and do his best to chew my ears off before I could get them under the cover. After I had covered up my head he would creep fiercely and tug and pull at the bedding until I got up. We got to be great pals, Hide-rack and I.

It wasn't until summer that Hide-rack began to



The Morgans did their best to run over the flying dog, and he in turn ran as if his very life depended upon it.

Hide-Rack

By Glenn Balch

Illustrated by Frank Schoonover

earn his keep. Dad operated a pack string, taking apterians and turkeys back into the hills on hunting and fishing and sight-seeing trips. We had better than thirty head of horses. At night we turned them loose to feed in the bunch grass and our first job every morning was to gather them up. I was chief wrangler, besides being packer and cook and general camp handy, and the task of rounding up the horses fell to me.

Hide-rack went with us a few times and soon got the idea of rounding up the stragglers. He was a natural-born herder and any horse that proved obstinate got clipped on his rear fetlocks. At first I was afraid they would kill him, but after he had been licked two or three times he learned how to dodge flying horses. Running close to the ground he would dart in behind the horse, nip him on the hock, and he away before the horse could get his hind legs in action.

ONE morning, as I was getting ready to go after the horses and Hide-rack was leaning about, impatient to get started, Dad said sternly, "No get yet, Hide-rack," and waved his hand towards the hillside where the bunch was feeding.

Hide-rack stopped his bounding, and with that handsome head cocked to one side, stood looking inquisitively at my father.

"Go get 'em," Dad ordered again, waving his hand as before.

The dog ran a short distance towards the horses, then turned and came trotting back. Paing, Dad squarely he looked up into his face, wringing the skin just above his brown eyes like a human being. His expression said, "What do you mean?" Just as plain as if he had been able to talk. Dad repeated his command and again the big collie started away, only to stop and return.

On the third attempt Hide-rack seemed to get the idea. For he turned a red and pale streak up the hill to the horses. We could hear his yowls bark as he rounded them and sent them flying down the slope. Something choked my throat—a kind of wild joy and pride—so these thirty dirty old horses, blacks and greys and bays, with manes and tails flying, came charging down the hill and the big collie racing in the rear.

The horses soon came to enjoy this morning run as much as the dog, and the more high-strung would

snort and stamp their feet as if in great fear when he came near. But the minute we put the halters or bridles on, Hide-rack could walk under their bellies or sit down in their shade, and they would pay no attention. Hide-rack began to consider the horses his special charges, and he looked after them in a kind of fatherly manner that made Dad and me laugh.

One day a pack mule named Nell overcame. We distributed her pack among the other animals and turned her loose to follow in the rear. All day long Hide-rack trailed at her side, and when the limps into camp late that night he was marching nobly just a few feet in front of her. Can you beat a dog like that?

The very next day a pack horse made a misstep on a narrow canyon trail and rolled to the bottom. We scrambled down—Dad and I and a couple of drunks. Dad looked over Dad—the pack horse—and then dodged nervously at me. I waited while Dad and me and lost in the hills.

In the spring Hide-rack was larger and more beautiful than ever. His red and gold coat, his black-spotted, tapering nose, and paw-hoofed throat made him a host of color as he dashed along the hillside after the snorting rabbits. He weighed no sound and was hard as nails. He and I went on the cabin floor, and how he snickered me about!

I began to look for the trail. I was used to feel the smooth hard leather of a saddle between my legs again, and now of all this Hide-rack I began to see the bunch—old Nell and Jug and Hubs and Creper and Dan and the rest. We went out one day to the shed to limbo up the old track for the trip to the valley. I was putting a trail in the end when Dad almost knocked me over with a few words.

"Once," he said, "that indifference tone used by fathers when they've got something good up their sleeve, 'I've a new saddle horse for you this summer.'"

"Back in the canyon with Bud!" Dad looked at me with a question in his eyes, and I nodded.

I rode back to the scene of the accident, and sure enough, there hid Hide-rack looking at the dead horse as if he couldn't understand why Bud didn't get up and follow the train.

We had no more accidents that trip, and late in the fall, we took the horses down to a farm in the Snake River valley where they wintered. Dad went down a few days early in our old broken-down truck and Hide-rack and I drove the horses. The trip down required ten days. Then Dad and I loaded the winter supplies in the truck, and taking Hide-rack in with us, made the trip back to the ranch.

For the first two weeks after we got back Hide-rack was lost. Every morning he would go out and roam the hills looking for the horses. For hours he would search out down and pillars, sometimes whining and other times barking loudly, as if he thought the sound of his voice might bring the bunch thundering from some hidden covert. But as the days sped by he gradually began to spend more time with Dad and me and less in the hills.

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"Once," he said, "that indifference tone used by fathers when they've got something good up their sleeve, 'I've a new saddle horse for you this summer.'"



Hide-rack led rather than drove the horses every morning. I seldom knew what would have happened if he had tripped and fallen.

One time, when I was just a youngster I had run across a picture of a handsome Morgan stallion in an old cavalry journal, and ever since then I had been wild for a Morgan. Dad knew how much I wanted a mount of that horse-bred kind. If Dad had added an ordinary pony to our herd, it wouldn't have been important enough to mention.

"He is it—no?" I stammered.

"Yep, it's a Morgan," I had him sent out from Kentucky during the winter.

I must have registered joy all over, for Dad took just one glance at me and laughed. Hide-rack got all excited, out of plain sympathy.

Well, I could hardly wait until we reached the ranch in the Snake River valley. As the old truck wheeled in sight I glided my eyes on the pasture where I knew the horses were. And there, dining among the rangeland pines like diamonds among cut glass, I saw—not one, but two blood-red bays whose marks of strength, speed, endurance, and breeding stood out even from that distance.

"Two!" I gasped.

"Yep," replied Dad, grinning from ear to ear. "One for you and one for me. You can have your choice."

When I saw these two wonderful horses of choice range, I couldn't talk. The sun shot rays from their velvet coats. From their smoky, rickety hooves to the tips of their handsome, intelligent heads they were perfect portraits.

"I'll take the gelding," I said.

We named this Red in approval of my choice. "The man is good enough for me."

Dad called him Red and Ruby. I put my saddle on Red and took a run in the aspenbrush. He was by far the fastest and most powerful mount I'd ever had. When we rode the most powerful mount I'd ever had to the shed to limbo up the old track for the trip to the valley. I was putting a trail in the end when Dad almost knocked me over with a few words.

The first morning after we got back home I called Hide-rack out of the cabin and waved my hand towards the horses feeding on a nearby hillside.

"Go get 'em," I commanded, wondering if he remembered.

With a joyous bark he was off, his red-gold body cutting a streak through the green grass. He rounded up the bunch like an old-timer and began to drive them down. But the high-powered intelligence of the Morgan was something else again. They refused to be driven. Instead they circled warily, always keeping their forefeet towards the big red dog.

Hide-rack changed his tactics. He tried to sneak in behind them to get at their fetlocks, but they were so quick as he, and what is more, when he got to where they would run at him, forcing him to take to cover.

HIDE-RACK was stumped. After working hard for half an hour he sat down at a safe distance, and I could see his intelligent head cocked to one side. Dad and I were watching, both feeling regretful. It looked as if the addition of the Morgans to our herd was to ruin Hide-rack's usefulness.

But as we watched the dog began again. He would go as near the Morgans as he dared, then race to the brush when they took after him. It seemed to develop into a game, and as it progressed the dumber bay horses joined in. Soon the entire herd was pounding on Hide-rack's heels, and all both horses and dog, enjoying it. But that wasn't bringing the horses in.

"I guess you'll have to put 'em in, Chet," Dad said finally.

"With a minute," I begged. "I've got an idea." Then, waiting until the horses were half after the dog, I whistled shrilly, a signal that I always used to call Hide-rack to me. The dog heard me. He seemed to hesitate in his stride just an instant, then veered his course from his retreating in the underbrush to the direction of the cabin.

The horses, Morgans, range stuff and all, followed him at a dead run. Down the hillside they came, the red-gold dog streaking in front, the two bays

close on his heels, and the rest of the bunch strung out behind, tails and manes flying. It was great!

Hide-rack didn't stop until he was safe between my legs. The horses pulled up prancing and snorting at the very cabin door, and we easily rounded them into the corral. I wanted to know whether there was real enmity between the dog and the Morgans; so I put a bridle on Red and led him to the dog. The horse paid no attention whatever to Hide-rack, and the big cattle proved that it was all in fun by walking calmly under the boy's belly and lying down in his shade, within a few feet of those flashing front feet that he had been dodging just a few minutes before.

After that, Hide-rack led, rather than drove, the horses up every morning, and they always came in at full speed, the Morgans doing their best to run over the flying dog, and he in turn running as if his very life depended upon it. I don't know what would have happened if he had tripped and fallen, but I never believed the horses would have intentionally harmed him. It was all a game.

As the days passed the horses came to expect the early morning race. When they saw him coming they would throw up their heads and watch until he was in their midst. Then, with much snorting and swoor-

near the door. I arose early the morning after Dad had gone, cooked my breakfast and then sent the dog after the horses. They weren't in sight and I supposed they were in one of the neighboring gullies, but in a short time Hide-rack returned without them, his big eyes puffed.

I thought they'd strayed farther than usual during the night and left the cabin to look for them without bothering to put on hat or coat. Hide-rack was at my heels and now and then I sent him off into the brush.

Half a mile from the cabin I found the herd's tracks and began to trail them. For an hour I stuck to the trail and at the end of that time the horses were nowhere in sight.

I BEGAN to get suspicious. The tracks were in a straight line and grazing horses don't move in that manner. Also, the corral at the cabin was home to this bunch and they wouldn't leave it of their own free will. Gradually it dawned upon me that they were being driven. I looked over the trail closely and discovered that one particular set of tracks tracked back and forth across the broad trail left by the entire band. That convinced me that this horse carried a rider and that the rider's intentions were to drive the herd away from the cabin. In short, our horses, including the two Morgans, had been stolen.

All of a sudden I began longing for Dad. I felt lonely and—well, afraid. But Dad, even then, was rattling along in the old track towards the ranch in the valley, and it would be ten to twelve days before he would even worry about me. In that time the thieves would have our horses so far away that we could never find them. I knew now that the thieves had been waiting for this chance. They had waited for Dad to go—he's a tiger when he's mad—and had figured me up as a nobody.

The tracks pointed up the valley, showing that the rustlers planned to take this bunch out through Vanity Pass and into Cascade, from which point the horses could be distributed to individual buyers. Once through Vanity Pass, they'd get away with the theft. Of course Red and Ruby would be taken to a distant section of the country, where no one would recognize them.

Vanity Pass is one of the highest in the Sierras and the first big snow that came in the fall laid it tight against man and beast until spring. From the tang of frost in the air I knew

it would be only a few days until the big snows began. Before Dad could possibly arrive, the Pass would be blocked and we wouldn't be able to take up the pursuit until spring, and by that time pursuit would be useless. The trail had been well planned, yet it wasn't going to stand by without lifting a finger while thieves drove my Morgan away. I'm a faster, too, and I've got my share of Dad's temper.

I had a gun, my own gun, feed, or bedding. As much as I wanted a rifle, to return to the cabin would mean loss of time, and the snow clouds were in the sky. Calling Hide-rack to heel I took the trail, walking with that long, swinging gait of mountain men. I didn't run or trot for I knew how speed killed, yet it wasn't country and I had a long hike before me. Dad had often told me: "The way to make haste in the hills is slowly."

The trail was easy to follow. The thieves had taken no pains whatever to cover it. They were sure the threatening snow would do that for them. Straight as a die they laid their course for Vanity Pass.

All morning I stuck to the trail, climbing now and then to a high point to reconnoiter the country ahead. At noon I captured a blue grouse with a rock and Hide-rack snapped it. Cooking it quickly over a hot fire, I ate the treat and gave the rest to the dog. Then we took the trail again. I was careful to keep Hide-rack at my heels for fear he would run ahead and betray my presence. He seemed to realize that something unusual was afoot and stuck close to me, silent as a shadow.

The sun dropped behind the western peaks, dusk came, and it grew cold. I had no trouble in following the trail in the dark because I knew where it was going. About ten o'clock the moon came out, and I felt in the clouds, casting a pale glow over the forest. I was now following the tracks in the bed of a narrow, steep-walled canyon.

Suddenly, a few hundred yards ahead, near the canyon camp, I saw the embers of a dying fire. The rustlers had camped. Crouching closer I made out the blanketed forms of three men about the fire. The horses were not in sight, nor could I hear them.

"Maybe," I thought, "a fourth man is guarding the herd."

Backing up a safe distance from the camp, I climbed one of the steep walls and made a wide detour, coming back to the canyon rim at a place well beyond the rustlers' camp. Still I couldn't find the horses feeding in the valley. That stopped me until I saw in the dim light the mouth of a tributary canyon opening in the opposite wall, near the thieves' camp. With Hide-rack at my heels I went down into the canyon, crossed to the other side, and climbed the wall. Carefully I made my way along the brink to the tributary depression, and there, feeding on the luxuriant grass, were dark forms that I knew to be horses.

I could hardly restrain a yell. Looking closely, I could see no guard. This puzzled me until, looking at the walls in the moonlight, I suddenly realized that the horses were in what is known as a box canyon—a canyon with steep sides from which there is no exit but at the mouth. The horses couldn't escape without being driven through the rustlers' camp!

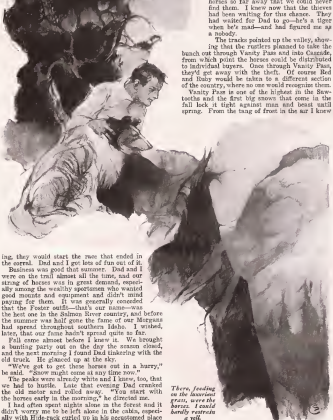
My spirit felt. Single-handed and unarmed I knew I would be no match for the three men. It seemed as if all my tracking had been useless—as if I must stand helplessly by while our horses were driven away by thieves. But as I stood there, shivering in the cold on that canyon wall, with Hide-rack looking at my feet, a crazy plan hit me between the eyes.

I MADE my way across the head of the box canyon to the lower side and investigated the lay of the country, especially noting the location of the sleeping rustlers. My plan began to look better. Then I returned to a place on the box canyon wall almost directly above the feeding horses and sat down to wait for morning. The rustlers seemed to be fast asleep, crunched there in the cold, hugging close to Hide-rack's ally body for warmth.

At last a light streak appeared in the east, the shadows began to disappear, and I could clearly see the bright red forms of Red and Ruby among the horses in the canyon. I counted them. There were three extra, and I knew that these were the mounts of the rustlers.

It was light enough to see clearly when I decided that time to put my plan in execution had arrived. Calling Hide-rack to follow, and easing myself for the way my heart was pounding, I crawled to the edge of the canyon wall at a place where it was less steep than usual. Then I grabbed the dog body and pushed him over. Twisting and taring he scrambled to the bottom unaided. Then he began a desperate effort to climb back.

"Down, Hide-rack, down," I commanded. He stopped his useless climbing and stood looking up at me, with his head in the air. (Continued on page 27)



There, feeding on the luxuriant grass, were the horses. I could hardly restrain a yell.

ing, they would start the race that ended in the corral. Dad and I got less of fun out of it.

Business was good that summer. Dad and I were on the trail almost all the time, and our string of horses was in great demand, especially among the wealthy sportsmen who wanted good mounts and equipment and didn't mind paying for them. It was generally conceded that the Foster outfit—that's our name—was the best one in the Salmon River country, and before the summer was half gone the fame of our Morgans had spread throughout southern Idaho. I wished, later, that our fame hadn't spread quite so far.

Fall came almost before I knew it. We brought a hunting party out on the day the season closed, and the next morning I found Dad tinkering with the old truck. He glanced up at the sky.

"We've got to get these horses out in a hurry," he said. "Snow might come any time now."

The peaks were already white and I knew, too, that we had to hustle. Late that evening Dad cranked the old motor and rolled away. "You start with the horses early in the morning," he directed me.

I had often spent nights alone in the forest and it didn't worry me to be left alone in the cabin, especially with Hide-rack curled up in his accustomed place

THE STRIKEOUT KING

IT WASN'T until after the third game of the season that String Johnson, State College's leading pitcher, had visions of a record. Then suddenly, as he sat before his locker, dressing for practice, it all came to him in a vivid, complete picture.

Seventeen strikeouts in his first two games! If he went on at this rate, he'd challenge the mark of the famous Bill Dornally, who had struck out an average of nine men per game in his last year at State. Ball was now doing well in the major leagues, taking his regular turn for the Green Sox, and his college record still remained untouched in the Valley Conference.

Now, for the first time, String Johnson saw clearly the glorious possibility of duplicating Bill's career. He had often dreamed of signing a major league contract, of playing ball in the summer and going to law school in the winter, but the dream had always seemed far-away and shadowy. Now it was clear-cut and brilliant, as if someone had yanked up the shade and let in the sunshine.

The vision brought a smile to his lean face, and his spirits soared. With a swoop he took his glove from the bench and trotted toward the exit leading to the playing field. Two other players were going out the door—Don Maxwell, catcher, and Bob Wadley, right fielder. String slung his long arm around Don Maxwell's shoulder.

"Don!" he yelled. "Gin, my boy! Can't you see the sun is shining?"

Don squinted outside. "So it is," he said. "What eyes you have!"

"The birds are blossoming and the leaves are turning," String chorused. "Let's sing. The flowers that bloom in the spring, trade—"

The square-jawed Wadley scratched his head and looked at String quizzically. "What's the good news?" he asked. "Have you got inside dope that the depression is over?"

"Not yet," String said cheerfully. "But soon." The three players trotted down the stone steps leading to the ground and stopped. In front of them stood a student, haggard the way. He had on a faded brown sweater with frayed sleeves. His corduroy pants just reached the tops of his well-worn tan Oxfords.

"Can you fellows tell me where to report?" he asked. "Element for what?" String asked.

"Baseball," String said, putting a long finger to his high forehead. "Good old baseball. Um—the freshman class."

"No—the varsity." Something in the words struck String humorously. Perhaps it was the confident tone in which they were uttered. Or maybe String's own high spirits. Anyhow, he laughed.

"Reporting for the varsity—now!" he asked. "Son—where have you been these many weeks?"

"Working."

"What position do you expect to occupy?" The student looked at String a moment and then deliberately turned to Wadley. "Can you tell me where to report?" he asked quietly.

"I guess you'd like to talk to Coach Hendricks," Wadley said, starting for the field. "Come on along."

String and Don Maxwell watched Wadley depart with the corduroyed student.

"Shooked," Don said grinning. "The great String



The student had on a faded brown sweater. "Can you fellows tell me where to report?" he asked.

By Franklin M. Reck

Illustrated by Dudley Gloyne Summers

Johnson, smothered by what appears to be a sophomore."

"Don," he confided impulsively. "Something tells me this is going to be my big year."

"Tiger than last year?" Don asked. "You lost only one game last year."

"But I needed a lot of horseshoes." String dismissed the previous season with an eloquent gesture. "I feel like a different person this year. Stronger. And that curve—"

"That curve," Don said solemnly, "is one of the hottest I've ever seen."

"It is good," String admitted without boasting. "And from now on, whenever we need a third strike, we'll use it."

String and Don walked over beyond the first-base line, but they had barely begun warming up before they heard the coach calling them. They looked toward home plate and saw the coach standing there, with Wadley and the corduroyed student beside him.

Wondering what was up, the two trotted over.

Coach Hendricks wore a meekintosh, street trousers, and spikes. His face was sharply cut, and a pair

of alert eyes peered out from under the visor of his baseball cap.

"Tom Jarvis, here, a few pitches," he said briefly, indicating the candidate. "Don, you let him have your mitt." He turned to the new candidate. "Go ahead."

String looked at the new man more closely than he had on the gym steps and noted the eager, confident face, the well-set shoulders and straight legs. With a friendly nod, String walked out to the mound and waited while Jarvis took his position behind the plate.

"All set?" String called out amiably.

The catcher nodded, and String tossed over a couple of easy pitches to start things off. Then he grinned a warning at the squinting figure.

"The curve ball," he called.

"Let her come."

String uncoiled his curve, and listened for the familiar pistol report, but instead there was only a thud as the ball hit the rim of Jarvis' glove and dropped to the ground at his feet. The catcher straightened up and looked toward the coach.

"The mitt's too big," he said apologetically. "Is there a smaller one? Or a first baseman's mitt?"

A dozen nearby players had gathered to look on, and several of them laughed aloud.

"It's not kidding," Jarvis said, embarrassed. "A big glove handcuffs me."

The coach looked over toward first base. "Oh, Todd!" he called.

A raw-boned six-footer trotted over.

"Give this boy your mitt."

String looked on in amazement while Jarvis took the thin slice of sponge from Don Maxwell's mitt, and inserted it into the first baseman's mitt.

"You're not going to catch with that thing, are you?" he asked incredulously.

"Sure," Jarvis replied.

"You'll bust your head!"

"I don't think so. Anyway, I'll take a chance."

"All right—get ready for the fast one."

String went through his deliberate wind-up, but this time the arm lashed forward like a coiled whip.

There was a sharp smack as the ball hit the center of the glove. The catcher sat on his haunches looking at the horseshoe indignantly.

"Bust!" String called.

"Nopes," Jarvis called, and tossed the ball back.

String grinned. Never had he seen a recruit who seemed quite so sure of himself. Jarvis did know how to handle himself.

"You haven't seen the smoke ball—yet," he promised.

He wound up and uncoiled. The ball burned its way to the light glow, and Jarvis returned it without missing from his crouch.

"Not bad," he called.

"Not bad!" String yelled. "What's your name—Mickey Cochran or Gabby Hartnett?"

"Jarvis," the catcher replied. "Pete Jarvis!"

"Okay, mistakes," String apologized. "Get ready for this one!"

This time String blazed over the lightning-bolt pitch that had earned him nearly as many strikeouts as his curve.

"Swach!" Jarvis complimented.

"Thanks," replied String, slightly irritated. "If I keep on, maybe I'll make the team."

For the next five minutes String put over every-

We Were Tropical Tramp Engineers

A Long Feature Complete
in This Issue



Here, sweet home, is Honduras—conveniently called Camp Baghouse.

"SYD can cut across the bush with Diamond and Yanne and get the canoe," McCullough suggested to Mr. White, the chief engineer of our Honduran jungle camp; and I nodded and grinned—getting the canoe would be a fine job, a break in the regular work of line-running. Perhaps my grin wouldn't have been so wide that muggy evening if I'd known all the possibilities in that job.

But no one knew them. Mr. White had made arrangements with Vergas, the fat native storekeeper up the river at Copete, for the use of his canoes; and we thought all we had to do was to go after them.

"We'll get the line run up to the river tomorrow," McCullough said, mopping his streaming face, "and then, of course, we'll need the canoe to ferry our outfit across. I can run the line through the grass country without Syd's help; so he can go after them." "All right," Mr. White agreed. Then to me: "Be sure to get the canoe to us tomorrow afternoon. Every minute counts, you know."

I knew. And I nodded again, and slapped at a mosquito. We couldn't keep the pests out of the tent. But we were pretty well used to them; we were tropical tramp engineers—Mr. White and Mr. McCullough through training, and I through the good luck that for the second time, now, had brought me down to the tropics after school had closed, to work under Mr. White during my summer vacation. We were T. T. E.'s, and tropical tramp engineers learn to take mosquitoes and things as they come, and to keep on scrapping.

We were in the thick of a great old scrap right then, with a rival railroad construction company; and after the canoe question had been settled, Mr. White lay there on his cot and asked McCullough all about everything else. Mr. White had come down with malaria, and had had to knock off work for a few days, but he was getting better and he was keeping right in touch with everything for we couldn't afford to lose any time.

We were making a preliminary survey for the extension of our railroad line on

By Sydney H. Parsons, Jr.

to the Indian village of Olanchito and through Olanchito Pass on to Jutupa; and we had to beat the rival company's bunch of engineers into Olanchito or the concession our company had got from the government at Tegucigalpa wouldn't be worth a peso.

This was the situation. The village of Olanchito lies in the only pass through the mountains that's low enough for a turkey buzzard to fly over. On the other side is the richest valley on the east slope of Honduras, as our company knew. But our rivals knew it, too. So they had got a concession permitting them to build from Los Gatos, at the end of their line, to Jutupa. To get there, they, too, would have to go through Olanchito Pass. Each concession prohibited the company holding it from running a railroad within ten kilometers of the other's line; the outfit that got its stakes into Olanchito first would control the situation completely and annex to its

holdings about a half million hectares of rich land.

Naturally, we were dead set on getting there first. We had struck straight through the bush with our preliminary survey and were to follow the general line of the Aguan River until we hit the mountains. We were hustling right along.

But our rivals were coming from the west as hard as they could push, and their line was shorter. They had some bad ground to cross, however; so it promised to be about an even break.

The only trouble was that Quint, the engineer in charge of the rival outfit, didn't always fight fair. And we'd heard that he had a rough bunch of Caribs with him.

We weren't wanting any time worrying, though; we were too busy hustling, all of us.

I left Mr. White talking with McCullough and went out to tell Yanne and Diamond about the next day's trip after canoes. Yanne was our head mule, a little red-poly Waika who looked about sixteen years old but was really much older. Diamond had been my mule the first time I'd been down in the tropics. They were both fine Indians.

When they heard of our instructions, they grinned delightedly and assured me everything would be ready at daylight, and I left them telling Sequan, our head machete-man, about the trip.

"Wake up, Bua," whispered good old Domingo, our cook, the next morning. "It's almost daylight, an' yo' bre'fate's ready. Yanne does get yo' mule fard."

I groped my way from the kitchen after properly sampling Domingo's breakfast and found Yanne, with my mule saddled, leading a pack mule. Diamond, too, was there.

"Yo rate toes into (all is ready)," said Yanne, throwing on the last hitch.

"Voseos (let's go)!" I answered, and we mounted and rode off through the bush.

Near the creeks the air was damp and chilly, making the breath of the mules look like little exhausts of steam. I buttoned my flannel shirt close around my neck while Yanne hunched low over his



A tired crew gathered around the final stake of the day.



Our men lived behind this village wall.

saddle. It wasn't long, though, before the sun rose over the hills. The mules perked up with the warmth and joggled along contentedly.

Yamne and Diamond and I perked up, too. But we didn't do much talking; so I had time to do a lot of thinking.

A bunch of tall cabbage palms started me thinking of an experience I'd had a week or two before. At the end of the day's work, Mr. White and I had hiked back to camp, cutting through to the river and back that way. We came to just such a bunch of cabbage palms and I helped Mr. White cut one down so that he could get the core-sprout and partly formed leaves out of the top for a salad.

I left him cutting leaves to wrap the salad in and tramped on. Soon I came to what looked like a level clearing with a queer looking weed covering the ground like a lawn. I saw that Mr. White was close behind, and started to cross the open glade.

"Hey!" hollered Mr. White. "Keep off the grass!" I stopped and looked around. "What's the matter—snakes?" I asked.

"Worse than that!" he grinned. "That isn't exactly a lawn you were going across. That hole is probably ten feet deep in water and maybe twice that in mud. That nice, smooth clearing is a swamp hole covered with water lettuce."

I had stopped just in time!

"Look out there in the middle," said Mr. White soberly.

OUT near the center of the nice, smooth clearing, there was a little spot where water showed, and lying just at the edge of the water plants, was a big old crocodile. He ugly snout just showing.

"Let's fool him," said Mr. White. He got a long bunch of sapodilla wood, and we squatted down, hiding ourselves behind a bunch of weeds. Then Mr. White poked the long stick carefully through an opening, wriggling the water lettuce as if something were entangled there.

Immediately, there was a movement out in the clear spot and that ugly snout disappeared. A moment later, it reappeared, much closer. Another wriggle of the stick and the same thing was repeated. When the black and green head slowly emerged, we could see the cruel eyes and the bony plates that covered the ugly snout. Mr. White waited for almost a minute before he wriggled the stick again, and then there was a surge of the water and as the weeds parted just where the stick was, a pair of great jaws, armed

with irregular, big teeth, crashed together and the stick was jerked out of Mr. White's hands.

A cold chill crept up my spine when I remembered that I had almost stepped into that tangle of water lettuce myself. I was glad to go on toward camp and supper; I'd rather eat than be eaten.

Recalling all this as we jogged along, I grinned over how near I'd come to supplying supper

Right: Pleasant job from the swamp hole.



Swamp hole—watch your step!

for that crocodile. I didn't know that I'd soon be supplying lunch for some other hungry jungle citizens.

It was almost noon when we dropped down into a valley where we stopped to eat our lunch beside a little stream. We made ourselves comfortable, and were about to start eating when I noticed at the edge of the bush a dark, broad band moving slowly toward us. Yamne noticed it, too, and sprang to his feet.

"Drive the mules down into the creek!" he bellowed out. "Son kornipaz!"



Mr. White checking the triangulation—I'm just watching.

Army ants! We hurried the mules across the creek and watched the black herds spread over the whole clearing. In one excitement, we had forgotten the lunch. When the ants came to it, they didn't leave anything but the leather bag we carried it in. I started across the creek to rescue the bag, but after one bite from the vicious fighters I hunted a long pole and dragged the bag over to our side. There was nothing to do but go on, hungry; we could get provisions at the village.

About one o'clock we struck a path on the bank of a wide, shallow river. This we followed for

two or three miles until we came into the clearing in which lay the little Indian settlement of Copete. A cluster of peaked, thatched roofs showed above a high, pimento-pele wall.

As we neared the wall, Yamne cupped his hands and shouted "A-O!" After a moment the big gate facing us opened and an Indian peered out. Seeing that there were but three of us, he made us welcome and led us in among the shacks of the village, closing the gate behind us.

The shacks were built in rows pointing toward the center, where there was a big hut that turned out to be Vargas' store.

"Que quiere (what do you want)?" Vargas growled as he wobbled drunkenly out.

"We have came for the cañons Mr. White rented from you," I answered.

He burst into an angry flood of mixed Waka and Spanish, from which eventually I made out that the cañones were gone. A flood had carried them away. He repeated this several times and then waved us away, stumbling back into his house without a backward glance.



The mules had to swim along beside us.

At a notion from Yamne, Diamond and I followed him to a deserted spot near the river. There was not a canoe in sight!

"There has been no flood—no rain to make one!" hissed Yamne, and Diamond nodded confirmation. "May next time (he's a big liar)," went on Yamne. "We'll find out."

We unloaded the mules and tied them close to the wall. For an hour we tried to get some of the natives to tell us what had become of the canoes but either they didn't know or were afraid of Vargas. We couldn't get a word out of them. After a while Diamond whispered that if I'd go back to our packs, they would get some provisions from the villagers and use if they could discover anyone.

While they were gone I gathered some brush and built a fire, and sat down to think things over. I couldn't imagine why Vargas didn't want us to use his canoes. Mr. White had paid him—and paid him well. Maybe he wanted more money. Well, all the money I had was two pesos and I had given that to Diamond for provisions. But we had to leave those cañons.

Presently I saw Yamne and Diamond coming, looking excited. Diamond could hardly wait until they reached the fire before he began.

"Fado esta bueno (everything is all right)," he whispered. "The other engineer from over the mountains paid Vargas veinte pesos (twenty dollars) to hide the cañones in the swamp. I think I know the place and we can go tonight and look for them. An old woman told me where a must canoe is hidden, close by here. We can use that in our search."



The Olanchito church—it stands on the plaza where we drove our last stake.

The other engineer from over the mountains? That must be Quint! He certainly didn't fight fair. It was a dirty trick, trying to hold us up so we couldn't get our outfit over the river.

Diamond and Yano got supper ready, they gabbled together in Wanka; and as we ate, they gabbled to me in Spanish, explaining their plans. Their black eyes twinkled as Diamond told me how they would feed the fat Vargas.

"Yano," I whispered. Diamond finished, "you wait here until midnight when they're all asleep and then take the males down to where McCollough is waiting at the river. Tell him that Diamond and I will be there as soon as we can with the canoes."

"Ejéa, Yano, Sower," he answered. "They bar the gates after dark, but don't worry; I'll get the males out."

The night deepened. Little gleams of sunlight sifted between the pole walls of the huts around us, but one by one they blinked out. We lay beside the fire until the last flicker had disappeared. Like a dim shadow, Diamond slipped away to see if the coast was clear. He came back so silently as he had left and touched me.

With a quiet "Adios" to Yano, I followed Diamond along the village wall. Near a corner where the branches of a tree loomed far overhead, he stopped and, without a word, ran from the ground, going hand over hand, apparently in mid-air, until he stood balancing on the wall. His arms waved above me and a flexible bejewel was no thicker than your little finger brushed against me. I pulled down on it, test its strength; it held and in a moment more I was beside Diamond.

Throwing the vine down on the other side, we slid down it and went on to the river bank. There Diamond motioned for me to wait while he pushed his way gingerly into a mass of sword grass with the water up to his knees. Silence for a moment, and then the bow of a small canoe slid out of the reeds close to me.

In the stern, Diamond stood holding the long oar and when I climbed into the bow he backed us silently through the tall grass. A moment later, I felt the pull of the current and knew we were in the main river channel. The bow turned downstream and we floated soundlessly by the palisade.

SUDDENLY the steinots Sloop of a cat started us. The canoe surged ahead under Diamond's swift push and I seized a paddle to help. We didn't relax our speed until Copete was a mile or more behind us.

The river grew sluggish and forked into a maze of smaller streams. Diamond edged over to the far bank and before long turned the canoe into a little opening where the vegetation met overhead. We paddled for a quarter of a mile or more through a tunnel of pitch black. Then the passage grew wider until we floated into an open space.

A faint gleam from the stars overhead was reflected in the black pool. We drifted out into the center of the lagoon, waiting for our eyes to get accustomed to the dim light. On the black mirror surface of the water there appeared an arrow-shaped, double line of ripples that glided soundlessly toward us. At the point of the ripples was a wicked-looking, long, black snout and I had just had time to realize that it was the head of an immense crocodile when, with a swirl, Diamond brought the long oar down on the ugly head.

"Terna (take that)!" he said contemptuously at the monster snarled for deep water, turning up a current

of mud from below. The canoe rocked from side to side and I gripped the sides frantically. I had Mr. White's heavy Cat's forty-five hung on my belt, but I doubt that I could have used it effectively at that moment. There was a satisfied grunt from Diamond and he poled farther out.

"There are four branches," he said, "that run into this lagoon. We shall have to search each one unless we find the right one first. Let us start on the left. We will go slowly."

He got out his treasured native-made lamp, and set it impressively on the bow. I grained. It wasn't much of a lamp; a braided, cotton-reef wick was stuffed through the chimney of a Log Cabin syrup tin filled with manaca oil; it glowed about like a big firefly when he touched a match to it. The light it made seemed only to make the darkness around us more intense.

THIS canoe started on again. The first of the four branches led us winding to another lagoon. We skirted the shore and explored another muddy inlet. No results. We returned to the main lagoon and started up into the second branch. Again no results. We turned around and poled back to the main lagoon. The flicking glow from the little lamp made the mangroves along the shore look like immense spiders with roots for legs. From the overhanging branches, silent, white shapes floated past us—white egrets looking like ghosts or wandering spirits. It was like a lost world.

As we drifted along, suddenly the boat stopped with a bump. The light ahead fell into the water with a slight hiss and all went black. Its small splash was followed by a larger one back of me, and the dug-out lurched dangerously. My nerves took a leap.

"What was that?" I shouted back to Diamond in the stern.

He didn't answer. I called again, but the choking squawk of a night bird was all that broke the stillness. Groping back, I came to the empty stern. Diamond was gone!

The long pole stood scraping against the boat where he had planted it for the next stroke. A light glow came into my throat when I realized that I was alone.

Hurriedly I scratched a match and held it over the water. Small bubbles were rising and I could see a swirl of muddy water coming up from below. Harter took hold of me as I watched the oily swirl, just like the one I had seen once before that night in almost the same spot. Poor Diamond!

There was nothing I could do. The burning match scorched my fingers and I dropped it, shuddering as it had fallen down in the canoe. I tried to light another match but in my haste I broke several before one lit.

The eddies in the water were slowly drifting away and the mud was no longer rising. All was quiet down there below and the darkness about me rested like a great weight. The match went out.

A just then, a sharp, panting his sounded very near the boat. Instinctively I leaped to one side, balancing the canoe, as something tried to crawl over the edge.

The panting came in short, quick gasps and the boat lurched till it took in water. At the click of the Colt, as I cocked it, the grasping ceased.

"No fire, Jefe (don't shoot, boss)!" came Diamond's voice. "It is I!"

"My—good, hombre! I thought a croc' had pulled you in!" I yelled. "What happened?"

"A! (tempest) told overboard" he gasped; "see I dived for it. It is not for nothing—that my people call me the best diver of my village."

He held up the little lamp proudly. "Here, here, it lit—Jefe! That mud is very deep. Almost, I was coming up without my lamp—but I remembered that you like a light in the boat."

He was wiping the water and mud from the tin can when I scratched another match and he turned the wick for end and held it out for me to light.

There was a genuinely friendly look now to the little glow I had grinned at only an hour before.

DIAMOND wrung out his dirty clothing while I poled the boat along the bank, with the moon rising above the mangroves. Hour after hour we poled or paddled. Back and forth we went, twisting and turning, following every inlet to its end or turning back when the weeds or water lilies got too thick for us. I lost all sense of direction after a while I realized that Diamond, too, was puzzled as to which way to turn.

We tried to go back the way we had come, but with no success. Once I threw a small stick on the surface of the water so we could tell which way was downstream. But it didn't seem to move at all.

"We are completely lost!" I said.

"Ah, no, Patron," Diamond answered calmly. "I can find which is downstream and we will follow it."

He strapped and unhesitatingly slid over the side. A half minute later he came up and crawled into the canoe.

"That way," he said hesitantly as he motioned ahead.

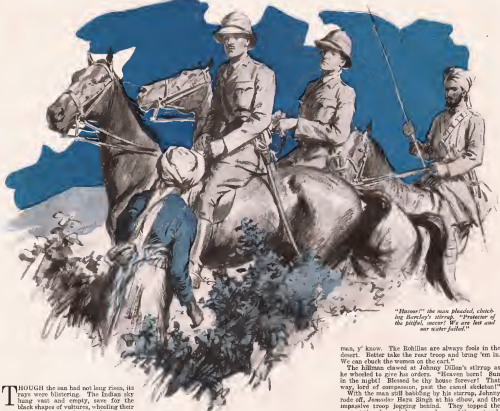
"How did you find out, Diamond?" I asked. "Have you crocodile friends down there that find lost lamps and tell you the way home?"

"No, Patron. It's very simple," he said. "There is a light, waxy moss that grows in the bottoms of the river, and the slightest current will

(Continued on page 44)



Camping in a tiny hollow with jungle and mosquitoes all around.



"Hassor!" the man pleaded, clutching Barclay's stirrup. "Protector of the pitiful, succor! We are lost and our water failed!"

THOUGH the sun had not long risen, its rays were blistering. The Indian sky hung vast and empty, save for the black shapes of vultures, wheeling their tireless circles against the incandescent turquoise above. Across the dusty yellow plain, jingled a troop of Rajput lancers, superbly mounted, very arrogant and slim and hawkish. Behind them creaked a horse-drawn cart that contained the pay in gold for two regiments of cavalry and the camel corps brigaded with them. A second troop brought up the rear. At the head rode Hugh Barclay, in command, and Johnny Dillon, the latest officer to join the regiment.

Johnny was slim and strong, dark-eyed and fiery-looking. On his spirited bay mare, in his smart khaki uniform, he seemed truly of the brotherhood of the born warriors behind him.

Yet he was completely new to them and to the Indian desert. Till now his days had been wholly pleasant and easy. Back in England, home, school, and military college had been woked into a swift, joyous life in which Johnny had had little time to think of India and the famous regiment with which his family had an old and lustrous connection. He had simply taken it for granted that he would join it—his dead father had wished that, his mother still wished it, and it would be all right. Hadn't everything always been right for him?

He had come to India without doubts. And he liked it all: the beauty and the grandeur of the ancient palace in which the regiment moved at Haranda; the shooting and the racing and the polo; his comrades, English and Rajput both. He accepted them all, and found them ready to accept him.

His brother officers liked his ready grin and accommodating ways. Junior Hara Singh and the other Rajputs regarded him with a friendliness not always accorded one so inexperienced. Had he not provided special delicacies for a young officer who lay ill, and indifferent to the usual fare? And was he

TRIUMPH

By Allan Swinton

Illustrated by Ernest Fuhr

not ever eager to talk with any of them, laughingly exchanging words in his language for words in theirs? So this new world looked upon Johnny Dillon as one who would fit in, and Johnny himself felt sure that he would.

Today, as he rode silently beside Barclay through the blistering heat, with the rock of his sweating horse in his nostrils, he quite forgot his discomfort in the fascinating strangeness of it all. On and on they rode. Hoofs clacked on the bare brown earth and swords and lances dimmed their obligato to the bass murmur of the *saavars'* voices, while the dusty miles went by.

Suddenly the horses shied—out of some green-green thorn, a stocky, black-faced native had sprang up in their very path.

"Hassor!" the man pleaded, clutching Barclay's stirrup. "Protector of the pitiful, succor! We are lost and our water failed. But five kottahs from thy path, Hassor! My wives and all my houses!"

Barclay, the taciturn but very kindly, turned to Johnny Dillon, drawing: "He's a Bohilla. A hill-

man, I know. The Bohillas are always fools in the desert. Better take the rear troop and bring 'em in. We can chuck the women on the cart."

The hillman claved at Johnny Dillon's stirrup as he wheeled to give his orders. "Heaven's arm! Sun in the night! Blessed be thy horse forever! That way, lord of compassion, pass the camel skeleton!"

With the man still babbling by his stirrup, Johnny rode off, Junior Hara Singh at his elbow, and the impetuous troop joggling behind. They topped the nearest rise, descended, rose, and crossed the neck, riding down into a broken plain that yawned about them.

Suddenly the head of every horse hung up, as from behind them over the dunes came the distant crackle of a heavy volley of rifle fire, followed by fierce yells and the drum of galloping hoofs. Johnny's heart began to beat madly.

"Sahib," barked Hara Singh, "there is some devilment! It is back there where Barclay Sahib waits! Let us—"

He broke off to give an indignant shout—"See that swine!" And he hurled his horse forward, drawing his sword as he dashed after the Bohilla, whom he had detected in the act of heading unobtrusively for the shelter of the nearest thorn.

The man abandoned stealth and feint, but the javelin caught up with him. The Bohilla ducked and scolded, then screamed as the backhand stroke cut him down. Hara Singh circled at a gallop and came plunging back, his red blade at the carry.

Johnny Dillon stared, white-faced, at the rocking weapon, as Hara Singh started between his teeth, "The fellow will bait traps no more!"

Then they wheeled, signaling the troop, and galloped back along their tracks, making for those far-off anemous sounds of battle down the slope they came, up, down, and up the next—and from its crest they saw a yelling, knocking mob of horsemen surging around the pay cart. Barclay and the survivors of that treacherous volley were fighting desperately against a hundred angry and hairy hillmen!

Johnny Dillon's stomach seemed to shrink abruptly, and a sick, cold, dragging feeling gripped it.

A fierce yell burst from his men as without any order they thundered down the slope, their lances leveled.

Before Johnny knew it they were past him—and shouting their ancient battle cry "Yi-ka! Lo lo



Albin Henning

Wanted and described children forced forcibly on one as a subject from a baby and great OLD man.

At the End of the Trail

By James B. Hendryx

Illustrated by Albin Henning

IN THE snow outside the mountain police post at Fort Simpson, Constable McNair was bending over a wounded man. This man—his name was Britton—had tumbled through the window upon hearing Connie Morgan's denouncing statement of what had happened in a short-time shack forty miles downriver. The man had felt sure he wouldn't be suspected of murdering his partner for the sake of a valuable cache of furs. He had taken pains to tell Constable McNair on the theory that the dead man, found with a bullet hole through his head, had committed suicide. But Connie Morgan hadn't been fooled, and so Britton had tried to flee. And now he was lying in the snow, wounded.

The shot with which Inspector Cartwright had stopped him had merely plowed a shallow furrow in the man's leg above the knee, but he lay moaning and writhing like a man in mortal agony. Blood reddened the snow from cuts on his face and hands from the broken glass of the window.

Strooping beside McNair, the inspector quickly went through the man's pockets and brought out a small notebook that he tossed to Connie.

"Looks as though you might be right—about his partner's diary," he said grimly. "We'll probably find something of interest as we go there."

"It's a pack of lies!" warned the man in the snow. "Have you read it?" snapped the inspector, quickly.

"Have I—can't read."

"How do you know it's a pack of lies, then?"

"Cause it's hot! He'll tell how I threatened to kill him—which I never! And he'll tell how I stole the fur and robbed it while he was running his trap lines! He claimed it was me done it—say it wasn't. It was

lajame! How e'n I trap now with his leg—"

"You'll never trap any more, Britton," the inspector said. "You shot your partner—and you haven't even the excuse of self-defense!"

"But—it was self-defense!" cried the man, suddenly. "He came at me with his revolver—and I plucked him!"

"Right through the head?"

"Sure—right through the head. It was him or me."

The inspector's face was brittle, cold. "That's the admission I wanted to get out of you, Britton," he said. "The admission that you shot him. Then, to cover up, you took his gun and held it to the wound and pulled the trigger—thought it would look like suicide, didn't you, Britton?"

The man on the snow was beside himself with fright and confusion. "He did shoot himself! I never shot him! I wasn't even there when he done it!"

Inspector Cartwright turned from the man in disgust. He spoke to Constable McNair, who stood staring from side to side.

"Snap your iron on him and throw him in the cell. There set a new outlaw. Better slash some Indians on those cuts, fast!"

Barstled by Constable McNair, the prisoner leaped through the door of the detachment building, while the inspector and Connie proceeded toward a frame

house that stood in the clearing beyond the trapping post.

"Got a visitor for you, fellow!" called the inspector, as he opened the front door.

A woman with a collar apron over her dress and her bare arms showing patches of flour nearly to the elbows, stood in the room. It was the same blue-eyed woman Connie had seen on the steaming feeder of the Stewart River, several years before, when he had rescued her and her two children from the forest fire—said then arrested her husband for blood running—the woman Connie thought of as the most beautiful woman he had ever seen—Mrs. Jack Cartwright.

The next moment, to his stupefied embarrassment, Connie realized that these blue-stained arms were about him, and the woman had implanted a kiss squarely upon his lips.

"CONNIE MORGAN!" she cried. "I've often wondered when we'd see you again! What are you doing way over here on the Mackenzie? What's your uniform? Or are you on special detail, like Jack was the time you arrested him? He'll have a chance to get even with you now—"

she laughed, and turned to her husband. "Jack, why don't you arrest him?"

The inspector was grinning broadly. "Constable McNair saved me the trouble," he said. "McNair brought him in for murder, arson, and dog stealing!"

Jack policeman, McNair! Figured Connie was such a desperate character that he depicted a real murderer to help bring him in. And if it hadn't been for Connie, the red murderer would have got away with his crime. McNair thought the man's partner had committed suicide!



Ten minutes later they pulled into a camp of four families of Stelco.

the prisoner—and if I've it, he's not coming back."

The woman turned to Connie. "Have you been transferred to G Division?" she asked.

"No," answered Connie, still embarrassed. "I was only in the service for a year. I was just a special commission. I came over to have a look at the barracks."

"The barracks! Alas!"

"Well, I was alone. I'll pick up Old Man Mattie."

"Old Man Mattie? You don't mean that crazy old man that was always talking about his inventions? I thought Bickey took him away."

"Yes'm. That's him. He came back in by way of the Yukon."

Instantly the woman was all sympathy: "The poor old fellow! Why don't you let him stay, Jack? He's harmless."

"Gee! I'll have to," grinned the inspector. "I gave him to Connie for a Christmas present. At that, Mattie knows more about the barracks than any other living man."

"Here come the children!" exclaimed the woman, as the stamping of feet sounded from the kitchen.

"Let's see if they'll love you. They should—they talk about you enough."

The door opened and a boy and girl, muffled to the eyes in small parkies, entered, clamoring for something to eat.

"Who is that?" asked the woman, pointing at Connie, who stood smiling beside their father.

Both youngsters stared, speechless. "He made us a water wheel!" cried the mother-of-four boy.

"He's Connie Morgan!" cried the little girl, dancing up and down, her blue eyes alight. "He's arrested my daddy! And my daddy feeds Indians when they're hungry!"

CONNIE and the inspector exchanged a smile. As Mrs. Cartwright bust on the door to help the youngsters off with their wraps, the little boy turned serious eyes on Connie.

"Will you show us how to make a water wheel?" he asked. "I'll get a tin."

"But it's winter now," and Connie soberly. "You can't make water wheels work in winter. Maybe tomorrow I'll show you how to make a logboat."

"I know how to make logboats," asserted the lad eagerly. "Old Ned was showed me. And I know how to make snow-shoes. And I can set traps, too."

"Fine!" laughed Connie. "I guess there isn't much I can show you, then."

After supper, with the children in bed, Connie and the Cartwrights read the diary of Joe Selkirk, the murdered man. It was

stereotypically, badly written, filled with unimportant matters and lacking in continuity.

Yet it presented an accurate record of what had happened in the short-fur chase. It was a story of growing suspicion by Selkirk

of Britton's good faith, and how he was "there, one had of suicide. It was enough to stir the charge of murder."

"Where do you figure on hitting into the barracks?" asked the inspector, later in the evening.

"Reasonable, or maybe Fort Smith," answered Connie. "Old Man Mattie's got a map that he says will take us to a creek where he has a gold cache. He says the gravel on the creek is shot full of gold."

The inspector grinned: "Yes? Well, if you're basing your hope of striking it lucky in the barracks on Old Man Mattie's map, you might as well turn back right here. It's either a trick map, or else it doesn't mean a thing. When Bickey took Mattie outside, the old man gave him a copy of the map, and made Bickey promise to get the gold and ship it out to him. Bickey couldn't find any cache. Yet we know that Mattie had a lot of raw gold when we took him outside. Maybe the old man isn't quite so crazy as he seems."

Connie grinned: "He's got some great inventions."

"When it comes to inventions, he's crazy as a loon—but he can live in a country that would starve a wolf. And somewhere in the barren he's found gold."

"I'll know by the time I get back," said the boy. "I don't want his cashed gold. But, of course, if he's made a real strike on some creek, I'd like to get in on it."

The inspector shook his head dubiously. "I don't like the barracks, Connie. I've been here twice a while, now, and I'm afraid of 'em. They've been known—"

"One of our men made it across years ago. His report is worth reading. One or two others have crossed from the Mackenzie to the Bay

A Long Story Complete in This Issue

The American Boy

Published Monthly by
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Friendly Talks With the Editor

Special Confidence

YOU'RE familiar with the saying about giving a dog a bad name. We'd like to call your attention to the reverse of that. You can do a lot for a misunderstood dog—or boy—if you trust him. We remember one boy who, back in college, when we took examination for a second lieutenancy in the cadet corps. We passed it, and in due time were handed the large and impressive sheet of paper that was our commission. It was signed by the commanding colonel of the regiment and the president of the college. It began: "Reporting special confidence in the honor and integrity of Cade!"—and then our name. We find those opening words still etched deeply on our mind. They did a lot for us, in college days. Whenever we were tempted to shrink, we remembered them, and somehow couldn't. The thought of them carried us a first lieutenancy, and then a captaincy. The next time we went somebody to do something for you, don't bow him around. Just smile pleasantly, and trust him. Repeat special confidence in his honor and integrity. Then watch him come through.

Witches

CHEROKEE Indians of North Carolina still believe in witches, were told. Two babies born the best ones. They were the only ones who were to be witches like them right after birth, then feed them liquid honey for 24 days. After that they're witches, and can walk on run rays, and such. At the age of a month, whatever they think will surely happen.

If We Were One

WE'D like to be a witch. A sort of temporary witch, just for a little while. We don't mind being suspected from humanity for 24 days—we have a sneaking suspicion that humanity wouldn't object, either—and by and large we're fond of honey. Just as soon as we were a graduate witch, we'd start thinking up the things we wanted to happen. For instance, there's our alley neighbor. But in a few years you'll be saving it of his wife every morning at his door. We'd make this fateful gentleman a polar bear, and we'd put him on a tiny chunk of ice, a hundred miles from shore. Then we'd melt the ice. There's a poor-sport acquaintance of ours who gets downright pained and nasty every time his beater is turned. We know what we'd do with him. We'd make him an anglerworm, a long and wiggly one. Then we'd go fishing. On the whole, it's just as well that we're not a witch!

Money

IN a general way you know and admit you ought to save money. You need it for tennis rackets, and summer coats, and school parties. But in a few years you'll be saving it of his wife every morning at his door. We'd make this fateful gentleman a polar bear, and we'd put him on a tiny chunk of ice, a hundred miles from shore. Then we'd melt the ice. There's a poor-sport acquaintance of ours who gets downright pained and nasty every time his beater is turned. We know what we'd do with him. We'd make him an anglerworm, a long and wiggly one. Then we'd go fishing. On the whole, it's just as well that we're not a witch!

you to extend your vacation a bit, if you seem to need a little more open air and fishing. It removes the fundamental cause for worry, because it bulwarks you against emergencies. There are many sound reasons for saving money, but the greatest of them all is independence.

Not Employable

MR. C. R. DOOLEY is personnel manager of the Standard Oil Company of New York. A lot of people call on him every day, looking for jobs. Most of these applicants, he says, are not employable. Here are his reasons: "Many do not read anything; they are not up-to-date on their own line; they are just drifting around, looking for a job. They had a good time in high school, they were young and manhood, and now in middle age they expect society to come to their rescue. With minds out of the habit of study and bodies neglected or abused, they face the balance of life as best they can, having to take whatever they get." ... "Having to take whatever they can get." An unpleasant situation, that, and worth guarding against.

Greatness

WHAT is greatness, anyhow? Is it a sort of God-given genius, that only a few of us get a whack at, or is it something that we all can develop, more or less? We couldn't exactly answer that question of ours, so we thought of some great Americans, and what it was that made them that way. First, Benjamin Franklin. The outstanding thing about Franklin was his common sense. Then Thomas Jefferson. Jefferson's best known quality was that of intelligent democracy. Abraham Lincoln was above all honest and sincere. George Washington stands for self-sacrificing devotion to his fellow countrymen. Somehow, when we get through with this analysis, we found our question answered for us.

Peeced

WERE peeced, and we don't care who knows it. Didn't we stay away from a hell game, this hot afternoon, just to write editorials? Didn't we wade through a long series of technical scientific treatises, just to pass on to you a bit of down-to-date science? We'll answer our own question—we did. And look what happened to us! We read all that stuff on account of the rediscovery of a gas called acetyl chloride. It was first prepared seventy years ago, the treatise stated, and thereafter the formula was lost. Nobody could find it. That interested us, and we struggled on. We found that acetyl chloride is a pale, yellowish brown gas. It is unstable chemically. It delights in breaking apart and entering into re-

actions with other substances. And a Middle West scientist has rediscovered its formula. And then the draught treatise closed with the thrilling information that "because of the difficulty of preparing it and of its instability it has no practical uses."

Also Gyped

SO THERE we were, gyped. No ball game, and no editorial. But we decided to get even with science in general by writing an editorial about it anyhow, and then we went through those treatises with blood in our eyes, and picked out a lot more information than that, so far as we are concerned, has no practical value. See if you can pick out an everyday use for it. Just go ahead and see! Here is some of it: Monkeys get bald and gray, just like humans do. ... A dose of hexacaine acid will keep guinea pigs free from scurvy for 50 days. ... When a drop of soda water fuses, each bursting gas bubble will throw droplets as far as 5½ inches. ... Five million million years ago the sun weighed approximately twice as much as it does today. ... Wazels often get the bluing for chickens killed done by wazels. ... There's a good word to end with—rats!

"Partial Suicide"

IT IS generally accepted that smoking is destructive to the growing organism—young men of your age are growing organisms—but Walter B. Pitkin goes further. In his stimulating book "The Art of Learning" (Whitney House), he states that a dollar's worth of tobacco invariably reduced his working capacity by one-third. In other words, it fined him one-third his waking hours. "Partial suicide," he calls that. When he quit tobacco completely he found that he read faster and more accurately, typed faster and with fewer errors, shifted from one task to another with far greater ease, felt noticeably freer from fatigue. During his period of heavy smoking, he could not write and revise more than 1,600 words a day. Quitting tobacco, he boosted this quota to 2,800 words in six months, and to 3,900 words within a year.

Some of His Proofs

THE mental efficiency of telegraphers, Mr. Pitkin asserts, sinks rapidly as the amount of smoking increases. Under pressure, heavy smokers make more mistakes in sending and receiving messages. They make more blunders. Moderate and heavy smokers among college students are ten per cent less efficient than non-smokers in all types of mental work. Cigarette smoking is especially bad. Smokers cannot count things to memory nearly so well as non-smokers. Smoking interferes with co-ordination, and lessens effectiveness in drafting, violin or piano playing, frehand drawing, and similar activities. Smoking is poison to the athlete. Pursuits requiring high dexterity, such as aviation, are sworn enemies of tobacco. Smoking almost always produces a dulling of the wit.

From a Current Best Seller

WE RECOMMEND for your most careful consideration two verses from the greatest best seller in history. We make no comment about them, because they speak for themselves. "Happily is the man that findeth wisdom, and the man that getteth understanding. For the merchandise of silver, and the gain thereof than fine gold." The best seller, by the way, is the Bible.

Opportunity

SCIENCE goes ahead so fast nowadays we sometimes wonder what else is to be done. Take aviation, for instance. We now have planes that fly faster than 400 miles an hour. Others carry scores of passengers. New instruments enable pilots to fly blind for hours on end. Breath-taking improvements have been made in everything touching an efficiency, safety, comfort. Yet William B. Stout, designer of the first Ford all-metal plane, isn't at all satisfied. "Planes must look more like a vehicle, he says, so engines and propellers should be out of sight. Noise must be eliminated. Controls must be simpler. The private owner must be able to travel in ordinary clothes, and in greater luxury than in his motor car. When it is a joy to fly, when it is a pleasure, then still work for you follows to do. Opportunity won't get tired of knocking for a long time to come.



There's something still about a star
When all the others hidden are;
It shines above the world more white
Than when a thousand jewel the night.
It glimmers stilly when the low
Bird notes are hushed, and the faint glow
Of twilight lingers. Night draws nigh—
Above, the guarding star rides high,
Pale and perfect, unafraid,
Blessing every silver glade.

An American Boy Poem

Hidden's lamp. What new miracle will the vacuum tube perform? Dr. E. D. Wilson who developed the photo tube is wondering.

They're Harnessing Giants To Do Your Work

By Franklin M. Reck

strange new sight that greets their eyes, and bringing back to civilization weird, new exhibits for the world to see.

You find no boredom or disbelief. At least I found none at the Westinghouse Electric and Manufacturing Company in East Pittsburgh. Nor would there be any at any of the other great companies that back the scientist with millions of dollars. For these companies are battling the new and unknown.

It's true that a certain Grecian gentleman named Thales, of Miletus, knew as far back as 600 B.C. that when you rubbed a rod of amber it would attract light objects such as feathers or shreds of parchment. But for 2,000 years people didn't know much more about electricity.

Then they began to learn a lot. A chap named Galvani decided that electricity was a current. Ben Franklin discovered that lightning was just a form of electricity. Faraday discovered that a current in one circuit can start—or induce—a current in a near-by circuit. In other words, the atmosphere around a circuit got all excited! Maxwell decided

that electricity was a sort of wave. Hertz sent these waves through the air and measured them!

And now, not only do we use electricity to read by, ignite the gasoline in our autos, run our trains, operate battleships, flood-light our skyscrapers, iron our pants, make our toast, heat our water, bring us our entertainment via loud speaker, communicate with the Anarette, take pictures of our insides, take the kinks out of our muscles, throw our railroad switches, but we learn that even our bodies—in fact all forms of matter—are simply a bunch of positive and negative charges of electricity! All creation is composed of various forms of the same, fundamental, mysterious force that accounted for the attraction between the amber rod and the feather, 600 B. C.! Electricity has made strides—but the real electrical age has just begun.

Take a quick, bird's-eye view of a modern electrical company. Great rows of shops employing in more normal times 40,000 men who manufacture all things electrical. Mr. Colin K. Lee, who accompanied me around these shops, dropped in my hand a small tube,

IMAGINE, if you can: An instrument that allows you to see your own voice. A lamp that enables you to read the name plate on a flywheel that's turning 3,000 revolutions per minute. Home-made lightning, three million volts strong!

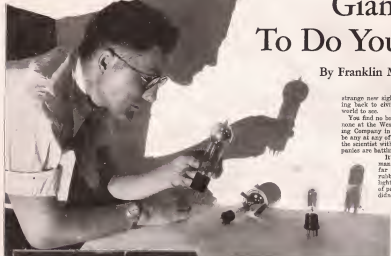
A machine that has run 24 hours a day, continuously, for 28 years. An electric tube that can see and put down on paper what happens in one-hundred-millionth of a second—the length of time it takes a high-powered rifle bullet to travel the thickness of two hairs.

An electric eye that can start and stop traffic, count people going into a building, detect a burglar, take his picture and flood him with tear gas! A glass tube, ten feet from your body, that can give you a fever! These are some of the miracles you see when you visit a modern electric company. There's something different about an electric company, and you sense it the minute you enter its doors. You find there a confident eagerness that tomorrow will bring a new wonder. You find explorers, marching into unknown lands of Science, carefully setting down every

Here is one of the great shops where electrical machinery is produced.

Right! Here's how you test that the current is strong.

Above: Dr. Thomas shows a beam of light and the electric eye. Left: New, powerful lamps light our greatest wonders.



just about the size and shape of a grain of wheat.

"What is it?" I asked.

"A lump," he replied.

I looked again. The object was so tiny that it had no discernible weight. You could put hundreds, perhaps thousands, in your coat pocket. Yet it was an electric light, globe, filament, and all. And these minute lamps, used by physicists, are made by the same company that manufactures all electric locomotives!

That gives you an idea of the diversity of an electrical company — a diversity that makes it impossible to tell a connected story of the whole industry. You can get a better conception of it if you think of a giant caravan. Out in front of the column are the scouts and trail blazers. In modern terms they're called the research department. Their function is to discover new fields of usefulness for the age-old force of electricity.

Next in line are the engineers. They hew away the obstacles and smooth the road for those who follow. In other words they take the new idea of the research department, extend its practical uses, and put it into manufacture.

THE army of workers follows. They occupy the new lands discovered by the research department, take the tools given them by the engineering department, and produce new goods for you and me to use. At the head of the trail blazers and engineers of Westinghouse is Dr. S. M. Kintner, Vice-President in Charge of Engineering. Allied with him is L. W. Chubb, in charge of the research laboratories. These men are commanders of an expedition that's penetrating every day farther into the unknown.

I found myself most interested in research, and it was a little story of Dr. Kintner's that put me in the mind to approach that three-story research building up on a hill, where quiet men are working in little rooms, producing miracles.

He was telling me how the short wave supplanted the long wave in long-distance wireless communication. In the summer of 1924, the great radio companies of the world gathered in London to plan the building of stations to communicate with South America. The British Marconi, German Telefunken, American E. C. A., and the French Compagnies were present. Representing America was David Saraff of the E. C. A. and Dr. Frank Conrad of Westinghouse.

The international committee was determined to build a long-wave station in South America—a station that would cost four million dollars. Dr. Conrad suggested that they build a short-wave station. The international experts still held to the old wave length—10,000 to 100,000 meters.

Dr. Conrad had a small short-wave receiving set with him—a set small enough to go into his suitcase. That night in the hotel he hooked this set to a certain red. Faint but clear he heard the voices of his assistants in East Pittsburgh, 4,000 miles away! For a long time he and Mr. Saraff copied down the messages from East Pittsburgh. And the next day they went to the meeting and said, in effect:

"You want to build an expensive, long-wave station. Last night, with a portable set measuring less than a foot each way we listened to Pittsburgh!"

They passed around the messages they had copied, and the expensive, powerful long-wave station was doomed. The South American station cost about

a half million instead of four million.

To understand that story you must understand the term "waves."

Waves travel not in air, but in ether. Nobody knows exactly what "ether" is, but scientists now believe that throughout all the universe, between this planet and all other planets and stars, there exists this something called "ether."

Think of the ether as a tremendous ocean in which all heavenly bodies are swimming. In this ocean are great swells, measuring 3100 miles from crest to crest. Then there are waves measuring 15 miles from crest to crest, and these are the 10,000-20,000 meter waves that Marconi first used to send his wireless messages. They're still used for government and naval signaling. You've called them "long waves."

Next in the scale are the 500 to 600 meter waves, used for popular radio broadcasts. Below that are the 30 to 100 meter waves—the "short waves" that Dr. Conrad so dramatically used in the London meeting.

Below that, for a considerable distance, scientists know very little. There they are exploring and learning new facts. Nobody knows what will come out of the waves under 30 meters! Later in this article you'll learn an astonishing fact about this band of waves.

Get down to waves measuring just one-thirtieth of a meter, and you have heat! That feeling of warmth, coming from the radiator in your room, is a succession of tiny waves in ether.

Go even smaller—to $32,150,000,000$ of an inch—and the wave becomes visible to

waves in the ocean of ether, and science has learned that they all travel at the speed of light—186,000 miles per second!

Somewhat, when you think of measuring this ocean of ether, you feel that they're dealing (Cont. on page 46)

Right, Hopy's the new aerial parking machine. Every time you use the crane and it's hoisted up, the whole building is pivoted below.

Just a little under usual!

It uses nothing but radio electricity.

Below: The structure under a working for drive mechanism. Below: Camera and study room's interior; telephone.

your eye as red! Then, as waves grow shorter they change to orange, yellow, green, blue, indigo, violet, and when they become only $32,150,000,000$ of an inch you can no longer see them. The first invisible wave is the ultra-violet, the ray that cures balms of ricinus.

Below the ultra-violet comes the X-ray, so they that it can go through solid materials and take pictures of that ulcer in your tooth. Below that, the Gamma ray, emitted by radium, and then the cosmic ray, faintest of all known waves.

Here, then, is a relationship between heat, light, and electricity. They all may be projected out as

Below: The camera operator moves third about until he locates the first light beam. This one looks out short waves.



The better striped ball. The ball seemed good and better even the plate for a called strike.

The Preceding Chapter

WITH the Cold Springs stands jerking wildly and the Eldridge crowd starting in shoving, Dan Crooley of Eldridge had gone out in the eighth inning of a tight game to relieve Christy Ames, star pitcher.

"Who is Crooley?" Cold Springs had demanded.

"Who's Crooley?" Eldridge had guessed. Dan Crooley—the weakest man on the squad! Why had Coach Sledge picked him?

Dan himself had wondered as he had gone striding out to take the ball from the angry star. But he hadn't allowed his wonder to upset his calm, and he had coolly ignored both the Cold Springs fans and the Eldridge groans. Refusing to let himself become rattled, he had judiciously worked better after better with slow balls—floating, dropping balls that were particularly difficult for men who had been smashing at Christy Ames' fast ones through seven hard-fought innings.

Christy Ames was a brilliant pitcher. But newspaper publicity, unwittingly playing up Christy and his Cold Springs hero, Warner, had gone to Christy's head. For seven innings he had pitched about-ball ball, but he had used judgment—he had never once hit a man, leaving them over. In the eighth inning, the arm had begun to kick. Christy's pitching had faltered and Cold Springs, exultant, had started a triumphant battering rally.

Then Sledge had sent in Dan. Christy, furious at being replaced, had slapped the ball into Dan's hands and walked off fuming. Dan Crooley, the unexpected star, the slow and stolid, had succeeded in chasing off the rally—and by a narrow score Eldridge had won the day.

But the victory didn't soothe the star pitcher. He was Christy Ames of the Ames clan of groovy stores, and life had been awfully with him. He had also ways had the cream of things. To have Dan Crooley,

The Bench Warmer

By William Heyliger

Illustrated by Dudley Gloyne Summers

a man with no name as a pitcher, a fellow who worked in an Ames grocery store on Saturdays, replace him in the last two innings of their final high school game had been bitter medicine for Christy.

When Coach Sledge, showing rare pleasure over Dan's promise, advised him to go out for baseball at State next year, Christy's lip curled. He himself was the Eldridge star to do the pitching at State.

Dan was more than happy over the coach's confidence in him, but he didn't believe he could afford to go to State. That evening, however, at the big Crooley family table things over, his eldest brother Tom, clamping one hand over exuberant young Jim's mouth to keep him quiet for a moment, said drily:

"Yes, you are going to State, Dan."

Chapter Two

JIM pulled loose from the restraining hand. "Will I see the games you pitch?" Will I, Dan? The family had often spoken wistfully of college as a possibility, but this was the first time it had been related as a fact. Kay's eyes grew stargazy.

"Tom! You're not fooling!"

"You won't never joke about Dan's going to college," said Mrs. Crooley.

"I'm not joking," Dan spoke the words slowly.

"You saw," said Tom.

They stood facing each other. There was some-

thing at the moment—something in the set of unyielding jaws and in the level gaze of steady eyes—that marked them out as of the same blood. The man was strong with quiet purpose, but no stronger than the boy would some day. Mrs. Crooley drew an anxious breath.

"You know best," she said, a little uncertainly.

For years she had leaned upon the strength and judgment of her eldest son, but today it seemed that another Crooley had become a man.

"Of course," Tom said, "if Dan has no wish to go to college—"

"You know it isn't that," Dan answered.

"What is it, then?"

"You were fourteen when Father died, and you quit school and went on work. It's far time I was giving you a hand."

Kay, one hand on her mother's arm, saw the course of Tom's mouth relax.

"So that's it. How much do you think you'll earn if you look a job?"

"I don't know. Fifteen dollars a week, perhaps."

"And suppose I let you try this family can get along scarcely without that fifteen?"

The idea of the Crooleys put nothing money was too stunning for the group to grasp.

"You've got to be a pitcher," Kay sent a bewildered glance toward her mother.

"Tom Crooley," Mrs. Crooley ordered, "if you have shed news on your tongue, don't be keeping it."

"It's the best of news," Tom said, suddenly grinning as he caught her hands. "Mr. Littlefield had me in the office today for a long talk. Beginning Monday I'll be in his right-hand-man's place, with a car all my own, going from job to job and bringing them money. And there'll be 25 dollars more each Saturday in my pay envelope."

"You're swagging toward Dan," "How about State now?"

"It's too good to be true," Dan murmured, his eyes wide.

"It was a typical Crooley story, cozy with talk,

and gay tonight with light-hearted laughter. Dan had to tell the story of the game, punctuated with excited asides from Jim.

"So Sledge thinks you need to strengthen your arms and wrists," Tom continued thoughtfully. "Will you work this summer for the Ames people?"

Dan shook his head. "I could probably get a job there, but I won't work that will fill me out. The Littlefield Company is laying that stretch of new road beyond Eldridge. Could I get a job there?"

Tom gave him a sidelong glance. "As what? Checker or time keeper?"

"A fat lot of muscle I'd develop pushing a pencil," Dan said in scorn. "I'll handle a pick and shovel if need be."

Tom nodded his head.

"Right," he said. "I'll talk to Mr. Littlefield to-morrow." Later he spoke to Dan on the porch. "What did Christy say?"

"Nuts!"

Tom struck a match and puffed at his pipe until the bowl glowed.

"A slow lad, Christy, but treated with the idea that he'll always find rubins in his bread. If they're not there, he wants to spend the plate. He'll have a little watching at State."

"Christy?" Dan laughed. "He'll be all right when we meet again. I don't like his eye spirit when he loses, but he doesn't hold his grudges."

The morning newspapers were generous with Christy:

Warner hailed Ames didn't. That, however, doesn't tell the story of the game, for Eldridge won and to Ames must go the credit for the victory.

For seven minutes Cold Springs held its lead before his speed, and it was not until he had given Ames credit that the great outfit was able to connect with the ball. Then, with the tying run on second, Sledge sprang a surprise and trotted out Dan Crooley. Crooley, at last, led by the crowd, pitched like a veteran and was never in danger. Christy, on the other hand, made yesterday, can be counted on a dangerous man for any team to face. But Ames showed that, at his best, he is practically unshakable.

Dan was content. Whatever would happen to Christy and him at State lay in the future—why he concerned about it. The story, he reasoned, having taken none of the glitter from Christy's crown, would make his good humor. That, at least, was something to be thankful for. A Christy full of wistful bitterness was rather trying.

CHRISTY, smiling and amiable, met him that afternoon. "Dan, I had for you a letter from Sledge. He told me he sent you in because you were the only man who didn't seem rattled. The game had no effect—I'll admit that. But, Dan, I'm full of pitching temperament. Maybe you're just a machine."

It's lip twitched.

Christy went on warmly. "You'll work this summer, won't you? Suppose I speak to my father. He'll have an always more money on his mind. I could use you to fill in, for him."

"I have no mind," Dan told him. "I'm going out with one of the Littlefield road gangs."

Slowly the significance of this dawned on Christy. The smile faded.

"Where's Dan?"

"He's taking Sledge a little seriously, isn't he?"

"Not alone," Dan asked.

"Not alone," Christy snapped. Abruptly he turned and walked away, and he always looked back.

"Don't let those two men go to your head," he said, and this time was gone for good.

Dan shrugged. He had talked Ames for years, hiding out a generous hand moment, and sleeping your face the night.

"I'm not afraid. Christy's wasn't what you might call small."

He smiled, and the Crooleys went forth to see Dan presented with his diploma. There was a storm of applause clapping for Christy, and a cheer for Steve Ward, and then Dan's name was called. A ripple of applause trickled over the ball, and disappeared over the crowd. Dan's name was called. A ripple of applause trickled over the ball, and disappeared over the crowd.

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"I didn't. I only wanted to be as big as the boys for Christy Ames."

"The more child," Mrs. Crooley sighed.

"He thought he was doing well."

Kay broke into a sudden peal of laughter. "Tom Crooley, if you pull strings like that we work down to take you down to hell."

"Don't graduate!"

"Ah, he'll know better by that time," Peter, fifteen, growled. "He'll be older and he'll have more sense."

THE following morning Dan spent his first day with the Littlefield road gang. He rode out to the job on a company truck, a numbered ladger on his back, and a hammer on his knees. In the east of the line evened out the porch with Tom. For a time he and Christy worked the same steps on every day.

"Tired?" his mother asked.

"None." At the table Kay leaned his bowl with food and touched his hands.

"The next day they?" she asked sympathetically.

"Not much." He tried to smile and winced. The next day he had to work with Tom. For a time they worked the same steps on every day.

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using only enough force to spend it on its way. At the end of twenty minutes that strange hot seamed gone from his shoulder. He tried a drop. The ball didn't go within twenty inches of where he had intended to send it.

"Sledge pulled off his mitt and held the white oval. "Sledge expected this," he said. "That's the reason he asked me to come around. You're doing heavy work now, and you'll build up heavy muscle. The game is to keep those muscles from becoming and tiring. You're losing something and getting something, and you'll have to learn to use what you gain."

"Can I?" Dan asked.

"Sledge says so."

"The saying always let Dan's eyes. "Then I'll," he said simply.

AND yet, as the weeks passed, he had his moments of doubt. He was like a giant growing in strength and finding that strength unusable. His mother had to let out his shirt, and he bought clothes a quarter size larger. His shoulders broadened and his arms and wrists thickened until he seemed to him that he was all bulky muscle, without control. Power! Power that he couldn't use properly. There were nights when the ball would drop wherever Steve Ward's head, and nights when everything would go wild. Nights when his shoulder was free and loose, and nights when it seemed heavy, and weighted, and unyielding.

"Am I any better?" he demanded of Steve.

"Dan said it would take time."

Then came the day of his disappointment. The catcher stared steadily at the base of the mitt.

"I had a talk with Sledge today," he said solemnly.

"You have him worried?"

"Dan's laugh was grim. Why should anybody worry about a pitcher who was as wild as a March hare?"

"What's not his grim?" Steve went on. "Is the way you've gone to that summer to prepare for something that won't happen until next spring. He can't understand that. He's here a few when he finds out. I've been catching you."

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glew in his heart. "You've bought one this day in a fight, in part, to justify Steve's faith." But that growing belief of his frame was still something that would not grow and melt into smooth, unerring motion. Yet, as the days passed, he knew that the avenue of his wisdom was narrowing, and that he was slowly—very, very slowly—getting the nature of his own mind. August ended in September. Then came the Saturday when he took the numbered badge from his cap, drew his last pay, and came home with only college to think about—and a slow ball that was no longer what his slow ball once had been.

THE Crosby's reveled in his plans. State was only ten miles away, and the family pocketbook dictated that he live at his last school on his campus. "I would be cold room in the college," Tom told the family. "It would be better for him."

"Since when would it be better than his own good home?" Mrs. Crosby demanded indignantly.

"More, Tom doesn't mean it that way," Peter burst in. "I do," said Tom. "But while other men are living the college life, he'll be home or traveling. He may find himself out of things, and when his name comes up there may be those who'll say, 'Who's Crosby? I don't know!'"

"Maybe," said Kay, "but they'll know him later—after he's done things." State was a battle cry of faith, and Dan's heart leaped. He went off whistling to search among the garages of Eldridge for a car.

He found one, a wheezy old rattler that looked as though it might fall apart. It was a day of leaping caters, grinding valves, tightening loose nuts, and another day of painting the top, and varnishing the wheels, and polishing the body, the ancient vehicle took on an appearance of faded smartness.

He found where Steve State was to open. Steve came to the yard for the last practice. Dan found himself neither better nor worse. Having narrowed the avenue of his wisdom, it seemed that he could narrow it no more. He was not an underhand pitcher, but he had tried an underhand delivery.

"Don't do that," Steve called sharply.

Dan sighed. The catcher was right. To switch his style would be an admission that he was liked—and he wouldn't be liked. He swung into his wind-up and brought the ball forward and down. It floated lazily across the middle of the stone they were using as a plate.

Dan smiled grimly. He'd done it that time. Steve liked the ball best to him.

"Try some speed."

Again the pitch found the plate.

"Now a curve. Right here, Dan! Right—"

The curve failed to break. Steve held the ball a moment and walked toward the car that was parked behind the house. They sat upon the running board in silence.

"That was the fastest ball I've ever seen you throw," Steve called out. "Do you know what that means? It's good to give you a better change of pace."

"I'll need more than a change of pace," said Dan. Steve was not worrying about that. "Steve was one finger down the polished fender. "You know about Pal Chi, don't you?"

"The baseball fraternity at State?"

The catcher nodded. Yes, he'd been hearing a lot about Pal Chi since the season. The fraternity had made a practice of taking in baseball men, and now it comes pretty close to controlling baseball. If there are twenty men on the baseball variety, three-fourths of them will probably be Pal Chi—and they'll be the best in the count. His eyes flashed a keen look at the pitcher.

DAN hadn't bothered to take off his glove. There was a small corner spot in the palm, and now he predated it with an experimental finger.

"Doesn't State have a freshman coach and a varsity coach?" he asked mildly.

"Sure."

"Pal Chi told them what to do?"

"Of course not. But if there are two men fighting for a position, and one is Pal Chi and one isn't—"

Steve made an expressive gesture. "Pal Chi pulls for its own."

Dan sat very still. He saw it now. If you had your eyes played a card to make Pal Chi first, and fought for a berth on the nine after that. Slowly he withdrew his hand from the glove.

"How do you go about making Pal Chi, Steve?" "Make it hard, you've played baseball; you've got to let them know you're alive. Mix up in things. Be seen about the campus and get next to men who wear the Pal Chi pin. You can do it in the right way. There'll be fellows who've played baseball for twenty different schools coming to State as freshmen. Pal Chi will look them over. Next January he'll send out bids to the best of them. Maybe ten."

Ten out of seventy or eighty baseball men anxious to play for Pal Chi? Dan stared at the ground.

"Burger's ready," Kay called from the dining room.

Dan stood up. "I'll give it a thought," he said, and walked with Steve to the gate. There he stood, still holding the glove, after the catcher had gone down the street.

Mix up in things! Be seen around the campus! And Tom had said they'd be asking, "Who's Crosby?" He began to nod slowly as though something had come very clear. While other freshmen would be getting better acquainted in the dormitories and rooming houses and the library, he'd be day-hopping back and forth. While other men would be eating together in the Union cafeteria, he'd be having his supper at home. While other men would be around where State could see them, look them over, appraise them.

"Coming, Dan?" Kay had appeared on the porch. "Wrong!" He made an attempt at banter. "Nothing except that I'm famished." Kay's hand detained him. "You're sure." There was trouble coming in her eyes. "I saw something about your mouth as you came up the walk—"

"Oh, that!" He brought his hand up and brushed her ahead of him into the hall. "That," he said a little too quietly, "is what you might call the fighting look of the Crosby's."

Chapter Three

STATE absorbed Dan Crosby—and then forgot him. By Christmas it was doubtful if more than forty freshmen knew him by name. To those who noticed him casually he was "that day-boy who parks his car behind the chemical lab."

A few, interested in baseball, knew that he had played at Eldridge. One of these was Strang, manager of the nine, who was a Pal Chi pin in his vest. Strang, though a junior, was taking a better course in Economics, and Dan was in that class.

"Having him in your class is a break," Steve told Dan a few weeks after school started. "Play up to him. Crosby's doing it."

"Well, you might as well join the rush," Steve said, philosophically.

"And have a gang of guys elbowing me," Dan said ruefully. "Well, if I must, I must. I'll brush off the blarney and be liberal with it when I meet Strang tomorrow."

But when he came to Economics I next morning Christy was there talking to Strang, and with Christy was a freshman named Catlin who, for days now, had been trotting around with the pitcher. Dan, who had no liking for that job of spreading salvo for your own ends, passed unnoted, and was conscious that Catlin gave Christy a quick, inquiring look as he passed. Christy beckoned. "Oh, Dan. You know Crosby, don't you? Manager of the nine. This is Dan Crosby. Strang shook hands cordially. "Glad to know you, Crosby. I've seen you in class. You and Christy played together last year, I understand."

Dan found himself wondering from whom the information had come. From Christy?

"Dan was a slow ball man," Christy said.

Strang nodded as though interested. "It's a long time since we've had a real slowballer at State."

"That's a tough delivery if you can control it," Catlin said blandly, a slight smile curving his lips.

The words were innocent enough, and yet—Dan was conscious of Strang suddenly watching him with sharp interest. Christy's face wore a look of slight confusion. "I was thinking of the long journey of those work-outs with Steve!" Was Catlin trying to hint to Strang that one Dan Crosby lacked control?

"Any delivery's a weakness if it's wild," Dan said quietly.

Strang continued to glance from him to Catlin, and then to Christy. When the manager spoke his voice was still cordial. Somehow, though, it seemed to Dan that it held the mechanical note of one who, daily meeting those who were good and well, had trained himself in the art of being pleasant.

"Have a good season, Crosby, last year?"

"I had one pretty good day," said Dan, and gave Christy a look. He was thinking of the Cold Springs game—those two great innings.

Christy nodded. "Dan did the relief work."

"Oh!" said Strang. This time his voice was a bit flat. Pal Chi didn't go in for relief pitchers.

Dan went over to a leather chair. He had played up, as Steve had advised, but somehow he knew that Strang wasn't interested. It still lacked several minutes before the start of the class, and Christy came across the room.

"Why that crack about the Cold Springs game?" he demanded in an angry undertone.

Spots of color touched Dan's cheeks. "Did anybody mention Cold Springs?"

"I know," said Strang. "You know what Catlin meant when he hinted about control?"

COME of Christy's anger died. "He shouldn't have said that. I heard about you and Steve practicing—and the truth time you were having. I did tell Catlin. He and I were in the same dorm—your know how you'll tell a fellow things when you get friendly with him. I didn't intend him to blab it."

The spots of color faded. "We'll forget it," Dan said quietly.

That was about all you could do with high-tempered, wild, impetuous Christy who was concerned for him. But Dan couldn't forget Catlin. Why had Catlin set out to tumble him with a smooth sentence? What concern was Dan to Catlin? The thing troubled his mind all day. When his last class was over he crossed the street to Dickinson Hall and climbed the stairs to Steve's room.

"Catlin!" the catcher said thoughtfully. "He's an infelder, and the freshman class is full of infelders. There'll be a lot of them, and he knows it. He's smarter than I thought."

"Smooth?" Dan was indignant.

"Don't you see what he's doing? He figures that Christy's sure to make Pal Chi, so he plays up to him. Then, when Christy, he gets to Strang. He's playing in two ways."

So Christy was practically sure to make the baseball fraternity! Dan had begun to see something of how things went at State, and was not surprised. Pal Chi had only the yardstick of past performances with which to measure the freshmen. Therefore Pal Chi picked the stars. If you weren't quite a star—his mind tightened.

"It's the game," said Steve. "You'll have to play it."

"No," Dan shook his head slowly. "I hate to scratch a man's back to make his parr."

Steve looked at him. "You're smart in his mind. Christy was a star. It suited you nothing to deny that. Then why should Christy worry about Dan Crosby? It was a puzzle that December afternoon that he could not solve, and it was still a puzzle the day after Christmas when Christy and Catlin rode back to Eldridge with Steve beside him and Steve's trunk and two suit cases in the back of the car.

"Do you know how many pitchers Pal Chi will pick?" Steve asked.

Dan swung the car around a crawling track. "I haven't given it a thought."

"You wouldn't," the catcher sighed. "Well, I've given it a thought. She'll probably take two—not more than three."

"But if Christy is sure—"

"Suppose he wants to make sure not only that he gets in but that he develops enough influence to keep another pitcher out?"

"You mean—?" Dan began, and then meditated. Steve had said something like this once before. And Tom had given Dan a warning. Suddenly Dan began to chuckle. "You're angry. When Christy's right he does have a way of taking the away of any pitcher."

"Fear's a funny thing," was Steve's comment. "Some fellows are afraid of the dark. All right—try to make them see that there's nothing in the dark to be afraid of. Now they take away the fear!"

Dan still thought it ridiculous.

"Just the same," Steve announced, "I've been playing for you. The fellow with the room next to me

in Dickinson is named Hamlin. He's Pui Chi, but doesn't live at the house. I've been singing your praises. You can never tell—it may help."

Dan drove a few seconds in silence. "Steve" he grins, "you'd have to sing in a sweet tenor to get me any place!" And later, as he was helping Steve to take the trunk out of the car. "When do the kids go out?"

"January 10," said the catcher. "Look here, Dan. You don't want to pin too much hope to this."

Dan's mouth twitched. "I won't."

And yet the edge of hope crept in. There'd be two or three pitchers who would be prized, encouraged, given every opportunity to make regular on the varsity. If you weren't one of the two or three you didn't have quite the same chance. Even in their talk the fraternities drew a distinction. If you were a fraternity man you were a Greek; if not, you were a bum. A bum was somebody on the outside. Dan knew what being on the outside meant. He had been something of an outsider since September.

THERE were few fraternities, of course. There were even a few baseball men in other fraternities. But Pui Chi was the only one that seemed to count. Pui Chi was the only fraternity with which Dan had made contact!

The Crosby Christmas was what a Crosby Christmas had always been, rollicking, boisterous, and merry. Pui blossomed into his first long trousers, and spent the greater part of the day before a mirror viewing himself with solemn satisfaction. There was a fine pipe for Tom in a plush case, and trinkets for Kay and Mrs. Crosby, and warm driving gloves and a sheepskin coat for Dan, and an air rifle for Jim. Before noon Jim had not got out a cellar window and had disappeared, leaving Tom to put in a new glass. An hour later he was back, triumphant.

"Hey, Tom — I'm the best shot! If anybody holds my left eye shut when I aim I can hit anything. You ought to see me!"

"What were you shooting at?" Tom demanded. "Windows!"

"Ah, that was an accident. We didn't shoot at any windows. We were only shooting at Mrs. Thompson's cat."

"Jim!" Mrs. Crosby gasped. "You wouldn't do a thing like that!"

Peter, peering the floor in all the grave responsibility of long trousers, turned fiercely upon his brother. "What's the matter with you? Don't you know enough to have some sense? Do you want to get arrested by the cruelty-to-animals society?"

There was a knock on the front door.

"Oh!" Kay gave a cry of dismay. "It's Mrs. Thompson. However shall we face her?"

Jim melted out of sight. When he came back he called softly through the kitchen door.

"Hey, Mom! Is she gone?"

It was Kay who answered. "Yes—Mrs. Thompson's gone. You ought to be ashamed of yourself."

"We didn't hurt her old cat. It only got hit once, and that was in the tail. Is the turkey done?"

"Come in," Kay ordered.

Jim added in through the door. "Where's Mister Crosby?"

"Mister?" the girl demanded.

"I mean Pete. He thinks he's somebody."

"Jim Crosby," Kay said severely. "Put that air gun away and get washed for dinner."

Dan moved smilingly through all the paeety of that light-hearted house, but deep in his heart he was counting days. Seventeen days to January 10—fourteen—thirteen—now—He tried to tell himself he was a fool. Way, he had no more chance than a hare before a hound. But the thin edge of hope would not die.

He went back for the re-opening of college still counting days. Four days to January 10. The whole campus stirred with a fever of excitement. He saw Christy Ames here, there, and everywhere. And Steve, too, he ran across frequently.

"If you don't make it now," said Steve, "you can make it later. Sometimes they take a man as late as his senior year." "You've heard something?" Dan asked with a sinking heart.

"Not a thing. They keep that stuff bottled. If they want you, you get a letter. That's the first you know of it."

It came to Dan that he wanted Pui Chi more than he had realized. Three days to January 10. Then the calendar said tomorrow. And then it was the day.

He parked his car behind the chem lab. The campus was quiet this morning as though a fever had subsided and had left its spent. The schedule called for Economics I. Dan went to the classroom as the class was not there. Neither was Catlin. Steve appeared in the doorway, and they walked a few steps down the hall.

"I made it," the catcher said in suppressed excitement. "So did Christy. I never had any doubts about him. Catlin's in, too."

Catlin with his smoothness and his politics! Dan drew a breath. "I'm glad for you, Steve."

"I know you are. Get a telephone at your house? You could call up and find out if there's a letter—how's your afternoon schedule?"

Dan's schedule called for a one o'clock class.

"I could rubber around," Steve said, "but maybe pick up some work, too—unless a letter tells you he's in. You're not supposed to know who the new men are until they gather at the Pui Chi house tonight for a welcoming dinner."

Dan Crosby, who had stood unshaken before Cold Springs, found it hard to control his voice. "I'll know when I get home, anyway."

"If it's good news give me a ring," Steve begged eagerly.

For Dan the one o'clock class was a crawling nightmare. At two o'clock he backed his car out from behind the chemical building. The car was ancient and worn, the engine compression was poor, but he coaxed the last ounce of power from the motor and made the tense run to Eldridge in 16 minutes.

Kay was shing as she worked in the kitchen. He started to bound up the back stoop, only to check himself abruptly. He had to come home today as though this were any ordinary day, with nothing unusual in the wind. For, if the letter was not there, he'd carry his disappointment alone. He had told none of the family about Pui Chi—not even Tom. He knew his Crosby's. Had they known they would all, from his mother down to Jim, have been teasing the days with him.

Kay peeled potatoes as she sang, and he rumped her hair as he panned. He hung the sheep-lined coat in a hall closet and called back to the kitchen:

"Any mail today?"

"One letter for you, Dan. It's on the sideboard in the dining room."

One letter! His heart gave a leap. Controlling his steps, he walked without haste to the dining room.

The letter was from the Eldridge High School Alumni Association.

"Were you expecting something in particular?" Kay asked.

"No," Dan said slowly, and stood with his head a bit bent, tapping the letter against his chin. Well, the dream was over. He had been his kite and gone chasing after the tail, and now he was in the brambles and the thicket. Still with his head bent, he went out of the room and up the stairs to the bedroom that he and Tom shared.



Steve babbled incoherently as he pummed Dan on the back. "Didn't I tell you?" he cried.

Sitting on the side of the bed, he stared at the worn carpet. Disappointment had left him a little more, a little sicker, but his brain worked with a clear logic. What a nippy he'd been to rally with the thought that Pui Chi would kick him! Pui Chi wanted stars. And who was he? Tom Crosby, father of under-bellies games! Tom Crosby, who had known only one moment of pitching glory in his life! Tom Crosby, with a slow ball he couldn't even control!

"What a grinning jackass I've been!" he said under his breath. "Cris! lucky I never told Tom. He'd have thought I had gone deaf sure."

Kay had spoken of his future deeds, and he had thought, that day, that there would be future deeds. Well, that was what he dreamed of at night. He had long enough at State to have caught the voice of the campus. A State team was a Pui Chi team. If you didn't make Pui Chi your yard was hard, particularly if you were a pitcher with a slow ball. They couldn't find the plate. You were a barbarian. Of course, there were men who refused to be awed by Pui Chi, and went out and fought, and forced their way in among the elect, and were a place on the nine, and—

A queer, intent pucker formed above Dan Crosby's eyes. His mind repeated the thought slowly. There were men who forced their way to a place on the nine. There were men who went out and fought!

He stood up suddenly, as though stifling down kept his thoughts cramped. Control? What was control? Practice, and more practice, and more practice. Stars had often said so. And Steve said he was getting a better change of work—that was what he wanted. To make the nine because he was Pui Chi, or to make the nine because he was Dan Crosby?

With a quick move he yanked open a bureau drawer and pulled out a baseball. He cupped it in his hand, caressed it with his fingers, stared at it rapidly. And then, without warning, he swung his right arm high above his head, and brought one foot up sharply, and bent at the waist, and went through all the motion of driving a ball toward a waiting batter. He was Pui Chi. It was Dan Crosby's notion to his soul that he, too, would go out and fight.

Chapter Four

THE first semester reports, mailed home from State last in January, brought joy to the tribe of Croys. There had no more to be said. "You know," Kay told a coterie and the family celebrated the event. Ten-year-old Jim, stuffing himself gloriously, cut a characteristic eye upon the future.

"When do you get another report, Dan? Will we have better class next semester?" Will was.

"Can't you wait until you finish what you have?" Pete, affixed, growled.

"There won't be another report until June," said Dan.

"June?" Jim's mouth curved downward as he glanced on his fingers. "That's five months away. Guess I'll have another piece now."

"Then you can pass again," Kay said firmly. "You've had three times your share already. You don't see Dan eating six slices."

Dan doesn't eat much since he went to college and lost his appetite," Jim argued. The cake was removed, and he sat there picking pieces of icing from the cloth.

Dan was conscious of his older brother Tom eyeing him thoughtfully over the bowl of his glowing pie. Jim's chance shot had been a little too close. Food to Dan had meant luck and taste, and he had eaten that few, other than Pui Chi men, made the nine at State. And a Crosby minus an appetite wasn't a Crosby at all.

He went up to his room, closed the door, and opened his books. Then, with the books before him, his mind went back to the campus. There had been changes since that day of Pui Chi pledging. Christy Ames, Cathin, and Steve Ward had all moved to the fraternity house. Steve Ward had, at first, left him with a certain bitterness. If this meant that Steve had decided to become exclusive—but Steve, though a Pui Chi pledge bound blossomed on the lapel of his coat, remained Steve Ward. In some way, Cathin no longer gave the impression that he was merely Christy's shadow. Well, that was to be expected. Having caught her trinity, he no longer had to chase it. And as for Christy—

His eyes puckered. Pui Chi had made a change in Christy, too. Even back at Eldridge High he had been something of a prima donna—a bit standoffish, a trifle superior, a little careensiding. In his first few months at State he had added a careful wringing thought to an egg or two in a basket that required careful watching. But with the Pui Chi pledging the wariness had abruptly departed. For days now Christy had been genial and friendly. And when you was in that mood, he was a tremendously likable Christy.

The books demanded attention, and with an effort Dan forced his mind to study. Subconsciously, he noted sounds—Pete and Jim on their way to bed, in hot argument as usual; Kay and his mother talking quietly downstairs and Kay's rich laughter; Tom clanging the storm doors with a hard pull and latching them. The house grew quiet. He closed one book, opened another, sighed, and ruffled his hair, and became lost to everything save the printed page before him.

The work was done at last, and he stretched cramped muscles. His next move was to open a bureau drawer, take out a baseball and glove, and hold them tenderly for several minutes. Then, turning out the light, he undressed and slipped into bed.

Sleep would not come. Christy Ames walked through his thoughts. There had at times been real warmth between them. Christy, at times, was generous. And after the Cold Springs game, when Dan had replaced Christy and saved the game, Christy had given him the honor of paying some attention to him.

A Plugged Nickel

Few people would have given that much for Tierney's life after Joe, the Boss, had passed the underworld sentence of death. But the fat detective, gray-haired, round-faced, and filled with pie, walked amiably into the heart of danger . . .

Next month:

"Tierney on the Spot"

By John A. Moroso

Steve Ward held to the opinion that Christy had suddenly begun to fear a rising rival. Even now Dan couldn't quite see it that way. All he had was a two-tening reputation, and why should a Christy Ames fear a Tom Crosby? Christy had held him surely to string, manager of the nine, but lately Christy had been extremely cordial. Perhaps that was because Christy thought Dan was no longer worth belittling. Dan lay there in the dark, staring up at the unseen ceiling. So that was the color of the foe! It explained many things. It explained why Christy had presented him to Strang labeled as a pitcher who merely did relief work. It explained the changed Christy. That was the color of the foe! It explained why Pui Chi men, and Dan Crosby was not, and if you weren't a Pui Chi man—

DAN threw back the covers and began to pace the floor. Suddenly his foot came in contact with a chair. The chair toppled and fell, and while he held his aching toe there was a tap on the door and a figure stepped into the dark room.

"That you moving around, Tom?" asked.

"Can't sleep," Dan answered, and switched on the light. "A thought kept straying through my mind."

Tom closed the door. "Don't you think you've kept it locked three long enough? Since when has it become the custom for a Crosby to keep things away?"

Dan snarled. "I wasn't hiding. I just didn't want Mother and Kay to think I was in a jam."

"What kind of a jam?" Tom asked quietly.

"Baseball," said Dan. His secret worry was out in the open at last. Sitting on the side of the bed he told it all—his loss of control, his rejection by Pui Chi, the long, slow slide that might lie ahead.

"Afraid of that?" Tom asked.

Dan stiffened. "No."

"You're afraid," Tom said. "We've always had to fight for what we wanted. Not because we wanted it just for have it, but because it was worth fighting for."

"Is this worth fighting for," Dan said in an undertone.

"Is it? Then it's simply a grand test of your mettle." Meitile! Dan began to smile.

"That's better," Tom committed. "You've got to keep your sense of humor handy. A good grin helps out a lot."

Dan found Tom a fresh breeze blowing away a smoldering smoke. He began to chuckle.

"I'm hungry," he announced suddenly.

"There's a cure for that," Tom said quizzically. "They called the iron lung, and found the cure in a cold ham."

Tom passed two sandwiches across the table.

"You will be plenty," said Dan.

"One," Tom's eyes were softening. "A man can't walk on one leg. He cut into the ham again."

"You'll have me feeling like a centipede," Dan sighed, and ate as though there was a neglected hole within him that he had just discovered. "Any cake left?"

"Tom went into the pantry, and came out with an empty plate. Dan's legs twitched.

"Jim managed to get another slice," he said dryly. They cleared the table and went upstairs. A small figure slipped in the hall and whispered hoarsely: "Hey, Dan!"

"What are you doing out of bed, youngster?" Tom demanded.

"I woke up and heard you go downstairs. Will you tell Kay you ate all the cake?" Will yawned.

"Why should we do that?"

"Kay'll scold me. We men have to stand together, don't we?"

"Men? Is it?" A queer, suppressed rumble sounded in Tom's throat. "Get back to your bed, youngster, or I'll scold you myself."

Dan went on to his room, grinning, and fell asleep at once. Something heavy and dragging had gone from his mind.

The morning found him bright and elastic. He drove the old rattletrap of a car the ten miles to State through sharp, dazzling, winter sunshine. It was, after all, a good world in which to fight for things and win them.

STEVE WARD, meeting him after a morning asleep, brought the news that the fresh skin would arrive before the end of February 20. Sports of color came and went in Dan's class.

"I'll be keen for it," he said, and suddenly swung back his head and laughed. Oh, but Tom was right; he was good to fight for things. And he was good, too, to make ready. That afternoon he went to the gym and did a slow, jogging race on the track. Later, as he was bending and stretching, Steve came off the handball court.

"How'd the shoulder, Dan?"

Dan moved his arm back and up, and forward. "It doesn't seem to stick as it did last summer."

The catcher nodded. "I told you it would be easier. There was a lot of silence. They think Christy'll be the fresh star."

Dan knew what "they" meant. Pui Chi, of course. "I told them not to make the mistake of counting you out," Steve went on. He began to whistle thoughtfully, and the catcher followed him.

Dan could understand how Pui Chi had taken that. A pledge, blowing the trumpet for a barbarian who lived in the outer darkness. He followed the catcher to the showers.

"You may make trouble for yourself, Steve."

The catcher gave him a wide grin. "Oh, I guess not." But there was something in the smile that made Dan think that perhaps there had been hot words in the fraternity house.

"I'd feel better," Dan said uneasily, "if you'd don't take my part too much."

"And I'd never feel right if I didn't," Steve said quickly. "I'd never play for anyone else."

And when I went to look my opinion with me. Pui Chi doesn't own them. Neither does State. They're mine." He plunged under the shower and came out dripping.

"I'm itching to see that slow ball coming into my mitt."

Dan drew a breath. "I've told to send it there," he said.

A week later he knew he was coming into shape. His muscles began to feel spry and lithe, and his wind was good. Bit by bit more and more baseball men appeared for light workouts, but at no time was a baseball in sight. Varsity row, second-string men, freshmen, and even, one day, Cathin. Dan was aware of Cathin watching him curiously.

"You started early, didn't you?" the infielder asked. "Fairly," said Dan.

Cathin looked him over critically—and the next day Christy Ames appeared. Dan smiled. What would it be, a hot-headed flash of temper, or a smile?

Christy smiled. "Filled out a lot, haven't you?"

"About ten pounds."

"Was I not understand?" Christy said, puzzled. "A boy who weighs ten pounds can throw and hit a ball. You haven't been going hard, have you? Don't. The game now is to ease along. I got that straight from headquarters. We had Martin, the fresh coach, at the basketball game last Saturday."

Dan jogged round the track. Once more he couldn't quite make Christy out. The advice to ease along

had been given with open-handed generosity, but that mention of Martin made Dan thoughtful. Did Pai Chi entertain coaches to strengthen its influence?

He noticed a round of the court where Steve was standing. "Steve, did Martin have dinner at the Pai Chi house?"

There was a moment of hesitation. "Why—yes."

"Oh, last week."

Steve was too casual. Dan saw a revealing light. "Did you tell the house they couldn't count me out, the idiot Martin was there?"

"The difference does that make?" Steve demanded brusquely.

To Dan it made all the difference in the world. Once Steve had told him that he didn't say his friends with anything. Neither, Dan thought, did he say them with dexterity. A glow ran through his blood. What matter if a coach dined at Pai Chi and listened to Pai Chi sing the praises of its own? A pitcher's first job was to show the patient of his wares, and with a dexterity mate like Steve, he'd show them.

FEBRUARY came. The call for baseball freshmen was posted. And before the penitence was on a week, Dan knew that his strange wildness was with him still. He had nothing to show but an inability to find the plate. And yet, the battery men had not gone beyond lobbing the ball, but even pitching lazily and without effort, he couldn't locate the target.

Martin, the coach, watching the battery candidates, gave Steve a sharp glance. Was this the unknown wonder whose praises Steve had sung? He spoke to Dan.

"Where's your control, Crosby?"

Dan flushed. "Early it's maldid."

"They tell me you had control at Eldridge."

It was Steve who answered. "He had plenty. But last summer he put on a lot of muscle and weight. I think it threw him off balance. He'll get back his control."

"Certainly," Martin agreed.

Dan turned that one word in his mind, trying to read what infection it had carried. Had the coach meant it, or had it merely been polite dismissal? What was wrong with him? He had lost his temper, and the next pitch hit the gym floor in front of the catcher.

"Easy," said Steve. "There's no sense in fighting the ball."

Dan came down to earth. Christy had heard the dialogue with Martin and had seen that pitch. Spots of color came again to Dan's cheeks. This time he took his time, held himself back, and grew tense and tight. The pitch was weak.

Christy, in the line of handlers, called advice. "Never mind control; just throw it."

A muscle in Dan's cheek worked. Merely to throw indifferently would be to admit to himself that he was licked. Licked? He wouldn't be licked. A Crosby was never licked. A Crosby—

The grinnings of his mouth suffered. He was forgetting something. A Crosby fought the good fight, and fought with a smile. A sense of humor. The ball came to him and he threw back at him, drew a full breath, and sent it away with an easy motion.

But it was another bad pitch, and Steve had to reach for it.

A whistle blew, and Martin's voice called through the gym:

"Time's up. Once around the track."

Dan ran with his head still up, and with a smile on his lips. It was an artificial smile, fixed and forced, but Steve, running at his side, didn't suspect. The catcher spoke in an undertone.

"That's the way to take it, Dan. You'll find the range. No need to get discouraged."

Discouraged? The smile momentarily faded. What had happened to his control? If it was going to be like this forever—a great broke out on his palms, but he forced the smile back on his lips.

The squad away off the track, trotted toward the lockers, and spread out over the dressing benches. Christy Ames came striding across the floor with Catlin almost at his heels.

"Look here, Dan, did you ever give control a thought back at Eldridge?" Christy's voice was curious.

"There was never a need for it," said Dan. "Don't you see what's happening to you? You're thinking of control every time you hold the ball. Will this go true or won't it—you know what I mean? Your confidence wobbles, and the ball wobbles, and control is shaken out of you even before you pitch."

"Well," Steve demanded.

"Why, there's only one way to handle a thing like that. You concentrate on just one thing—

Steve's glove. You draw an imaginary line right to the glove. Do you know what happens then? That line becomes just as real as though it were laid down with a tape. Then—" Christy made a gesture with his hands. "Then you just pitch along that line."

"It's worth trying," Dan said gratefully, "and thank you."

Christy's hands made another gesture. "Glad to help along." He turned toward one of the benches, and Catlin was still at his heels. The infielder said something in an impatient undertone. Christy pushed him aside playfully, and gave a carelessly indolgent laugh.

There were red stains in Dan's cheeks. This time Christy was transparent. Crosby? Crosby would never be dangerous. Give him a hand. That's what Christy was thinking! Yet, as he drove the finger back toward Eldridge, he appreciated that Christy



The Golf Bug

By Jack Carpenter

It was an ancient golfing man.
He stutched one of three.

The others made him get away
And so he picked on me.

He holds me with his glittering eyes
And charms me to the spot,
And all the while he rambles on
About that wondrous shot.

He holds me with his skinny head.
"I took the ball," quoth he,
"And with a firm and steady grip
I placed it on the tee."

"I paused to spit upon my hands;
Then rubbed them on my pants;
I took a practice swing or two
And then I changed my stance."

"The caddy stood with open mouth—
His eyes were popping out
As with a well directed swing
I gave the ball a clout."

"The ball it rose upon my right;
My driver followed through.
Then, veering slightly to the left,
Straight for the pin it flew."

"The bunkers cleared, the gallery cheered
As on the green it dropped;
Then, rolling on a yard or two,
Into the hole it plopped."

"I stared, and then I rubbed my eyes,
Amazed at what I'd done—
Yes, very much to my surprise,
I'd made a hole in one!"

And then that ancient golfing man
Bought forty-nine new sticks,
And going out upon the links,
He made the hole in six!

An American Boy Press Poem



had been generous and helpful. In spite of Christy's careless laugh at Catlin, Dan found himself warming up to the fresh star.

Nickay was concerned off with the battery men and concentrated on that imaginary line to Steve's glove. Varsity men were throwing a baseball around at the other end of the gym. Luby, the varsity coach, came down and spoke for a time with Martin. To these things Dan turned. Christy was right. The imaginary line was as plain as though it had been marked with chalk. He bent his body with the swing of his arm, and laid the ball along that visionary mark, and saw it hit the ball after time squarely into Steve's glove.

"Better today, isn't it?" Christy asked.

Dan's eyes glowed. "It sure is!" That was a good haul, Christy! He said as he drove the finger back toward Eldridge, he appreciated that Christy

supper would be ready.

"Hey, Dan!" Pete clamored for attention. "Do you know what Jim did today?"

"Jim Crosby," Kay demanded scornfully, "did you have that air gun out, after me hiding it?"

"Aye, it wasn't the air rifle," Pete growled. "It was the way Jim went around talking. He told everybody how Dan was going to pitch all the games for the Star freshmen team."

Dan jumped into a chair. Of all the things to say! It would spread to many ears—maybe to the ears of Christy Ames. And it would make him look like a fool.

"Who told you to say that?" he demanded grimly.

"Aye, aye," Jim scraped his feet. "I had to do something, didn't I? After the way you told Kay you ate the cake!" The boy gulped with the stricken conviction that he had said too much.

"Oh!" Kay's voice was in. "So it was you who ate the cake, was it, Jim Crosby? And your brothers who should know better taking the blame and shoving your rascality." She flashed a look of indignation at Tom and at Dan, and walked out of the room.

Dan, going upstairs to wash, met her in the hall. "You're not really angry, Kay, are you?"

"Angry!" All at once laughter convulsed her. "Who could be angry for long with Jim?"

But Jim, a little afraid of Kay, let her righteous wrath and not quite aware of her mood, ate a discreetly subdued supper. Before going to bed he sided up to Dan.

"Hey, Dan, I won't say anything about baseball unless somebody asks me."

DAN fixed him with a stern look. "If anybody asks you, you know nothing."

"Aye," Pete looked up, "that's all he ever knew. And the next time he follows me around yelling 'Pull up your long pants, pull up your long pants, I'll sock him!'"

"Jim Crosby," Kay cried, "did you do a thing like that?"

But Jim had fled.

The day passed, and that imaginary line became an inviting groove. There was a dead joy in unweaving the springs of his arm and shoulders, in feeling the slip from his chest and hands, and in hearing it thud into Steve's mitt. He began to use curves, and found that he could control them, too. He owed all this to Christy Ames. He smiled. Worry took its strings from him and he was happy. The spherule like Crosby of Eldridge High when Coach Sand had sent out to finish the Cold Springs game—not a grim, tight-lipped, silent Dan Crosby, but a pitcher of pose, and of steady career.

"Come along," Christy asked him.

Dan grinned. "Better than that," he said cheerfully. Later he heard Catlin arguing heatedly, and Christy going that careless, confident laugh.

Spring began to knock at the doors of winter. Here and there a heavy day stole into early March. Snow melted and disappeared, a bed of pussy willows broke into yellow buds, young grass took on its first color of green, and the campus was rich with the smell of a world beginning to come to life again. Martin had made three cuts, and what was left of the freshman squad met and elected a captain. Catlin was the man chosen.

Dan was not surprised. To the squad Catlin had been affable, eager, and colorful. And he could play ball. There was no question about that. He was fast on his feet, and could go either to right or to left, and a greater aid to him was as good as killed.

"He'll talk nothing to Martin but Christy," Steve said. It was a curious speech for a Pai Chi man.

Dan suggested. What of it? Pai Chi or no Pai Chi, when all was said and done, the time came when a pitcher had to do his talking with

a baseball. With deeds, not words. A week later Luby took the variety outdoors, leaving the gym to the freshmen. At once a change came over the gym. To this point there had all ways been a hundred or more spectators in the balcony. Now they were gone and the balcony became a yawning, yawning yawner. The freshmen team was smart potatoes—merely State mice in the making. And then, four days later, the freshman squad went out, too. Fresh Field received the same treatment with its rickety frame that needed painting, and its small neglected wooden stands.

To Dan, after weeks on the concrete floor, his gym was the high and wide, a magic carpet. He dug his spikes into it, and wide ran in his veins. Men formed in line of the batting nets. Infielders capered about the diamond. A ball flew into the line of the sky and sailed away toward the outfielders. With a queer, exultant sound in his throat, he took his place in the line of play, following to Steve and to Haley, another catcher.

At that time, Andie, the tall one on the inside corner, with enough smarts on for a fast ball. And now a sleepy, tantalizing drop—He saw the ball sag, and drop, and drop six inches. "It was grand to see it behave like that!"

Martin spoke at his back. "Is that your slow ball?"

Dan blinked. "Why—that's what it's been called."

"Not slow enough. I thought you had a real slow ball at Eldridge."

The coach glanced at Steve. "It might have been taken on too much sleep," the catcher admitted, "but down in the gym I couldn't be sure. Maybe the extra weight and mashes—"

"Let me see how you held that ball," Martin ordered.

Dan held out his hand.

"Too far back toward the palm. You get too much into it. Held it with the first joint of the thumb and two fingers. Try."

The ball sailed wildly past Steve. "Again."

The pitch was better.

"Work on that for a while," Martin said, and passed down the line of pitchers, and suddenly came back. "You get the idea, Crosby, don't you? Holding the ball far out on your fingers, you have to get something behind it. That gives you a slow ball with a fast ball motion."

But all that ran through Dan's head was "Pitching area." The ball felt awkward. Meanwhile, pitcher after pitcher was called on to face the batters. No call came from him. And the next day the murderers, Dan, Steve and Haley, were back, ready to throw to Haley instead of to Steve, and he knew that Martin had weighed him and rated him. He was a second-string man. Steve didn't have to fear him. He laid out the best you had. Haley looked at you respectfully and shook his head when the ball didn't come true, so though you had done him a damage, Haley had slipped, and went off at a tangent over the catcher's head. "Steady!" Steve's voice came softly.

The word, really as Steve said it, brought Steve's head right off. No looking at yourself in the mirror and giving yourself the creeps. Control of this new delivery was something else to fight for and win. He caught his breath and laughed, and the laugh had the ring of a battle cry. His fingers tightened on the ball, his arm went tight as a firm spring, and the white horsehide soared toward the pitcher.

Wide! Wide of the glove.

"Keep steering," Steve called. The words were apparently cried to Christy, but Dan knew they were meant for him. And Haley went back to a scolding, gruff and reproachful! It became a

fight not only to conquer the new delivery but to hold himself aloof from the catcher's discouraging grimaces. Dan smiled.

"I found him still strapping, and still waiting for a call to face the batters. Steve overtook him between Fresh Field and the gym."

"I thought to get away, Dan?"

"Why?"

"I'd carry 'til I ride back with you."

"I'll wait," said Dan. He was glad, as they walked toward Eldridge, that he would have no desire to speak about his pitching.

"He'd sign Chris for the first game," the catcher said after a silence.

"Must be," Dan's check twitched. "Does every college have a fraternity to run its baseball?" he asked tartly.

"No," Steve replied without hesitation. "Here and there—that's all. I heard of one fraternity that controlled football, and messed up the team for several years."

"He's a rule for the fraternities to hold onto their college," said the catcher. "The college wouldn't stand for it." The car stopped, and he got out. "I'll be around about two o'clock tomorrow. All right?" Dan looked at him steadily. "Why?"

"Practice."

"Steve, did you come home just so you'd catch me tomorrow?"

"See you tomorrow," said Steve, and was gone.

From red spots that were flags of emotion shown in Dan's cheeks. He threw the car into gear and drove home slowly.

"He said," he said, "you'll bake a cake and have some lemonade tomorrow afternoon!" Steve Ward's coming.

"He's doing you a service, not he, Dan."

"A great service," Dan said slowly.

"I'll have the cake," Kay said, "and I'll mix it this very minute."

Martin's voice came shrilly from upstairs. "Hey, Dan! What time are you going to catch?"

"Jim Crosby," Kay cried furiously, "is that you? What are you doing in the hall? I thought I sent you upstairs for the both."

A door closed hurriedly. Jim's muffled voice sounded:

"Aw, keep your old cake. I wouldn't eat it. Just say so. Just ask me. Go on. So if I'll eat it!"

STEVE came the next afternoon. Somehow, as Dan prepared to pitch, everything seemed different. Even the ball, squeezed by the ends of his fingers, felt the awkwardness of its strange grip. And Steve's face was the face of one remembering that everything was going to be all right.

Dan began to pitch. Minute by minute he felt his confidence growing. Steve stood his hand.

"Good! Good! Come on, old boy. Give it to me."

Dan threw his body, and his arm and shoulder into the pitch. The ball seemed to take on a life of its own.

"He'd say," Steve held the glove up as a target. "Inside corner, Dan."

The ball found the glove as though it were a magnet.

"Fishes!" Steve crouched. "Try a fast one."

The afternoon turned to golden glory. The ball whipped and dropped, zipped and crept. The slow drop became a teasing, tantalizing, tempting, luring phantom. They both leaped and came on the steps of the rear porch. Jim, Dan, Steve and Haley.

On the porch, cake in hand, Dan and Steve started toward the street.

"Hey, Steve, don't you want another piece of cake? Don't you? Ask Kay for another piece. Go on. Go on. Go on. You another piece. If you don't want it you can give it to me."

Kay's shocked voice called through the kitchen doorway. "Jim Crosby! What-ever do you mean—"

But Jim had had on prudent heels.

Dan walked as far as the gate. "Going back to work on Monday, Steve!"

"No—I'd better go back tomorrow. The fellows I'm particularly anxious to see."

Dan gave him a quick, suspicious look. Steve's eyes became wide—and innocent. Too innocent.

"I thought it be Martin?" Dan asked softly.

"It might," the catcher said.

Yet on Monday Dan found himself lined up with the conditioning batters. He was young good today, and Haley ceased to roll his eyes and shake his head. Steve was over talking to Martin, and presently Catlin joined them. It seemed that the catcher and the captain argued both. Martin, listening, said nothing. Abruptly Steve stalked away, and Catlin remained in earnest conversation with the coach.

DAN sighed. Evidently Steve had sung his praises to deaf ears. The Crosby mouth tightened. Another fight to win the club was getting good at winning fights. He had overcome his wildness. He had conquered this new ball. Now he had to go on, and hide his tracks. The catcher and the captain came to him again, and he gripped it carefully and said a beautifully slow ball into Haley's glove. A shudder moved up his elbow. He glanced over his shoulder. Martin was walking away.

Christy was called to pitch to the batters, the cage was wheeled away, and Steve went behind the plate. Had Martin been watching him? Dan couldn't be sure.

Another pitcher succeeded Christy on the mound. Dan continued to watch the fleeing teams. Sam had written that the catcher had been hit by a slow start at State. Just how slow was a slow start? If he was going to spend the entire season looking at Haley's glances.

"Crosby!" Martin called.

Dan stood for a moment as though he hadn't heard.

"Give me the works," Haley chorused.

At that moment a warm grin in Dan for the catcher whose grimaces had once proved irritating. He was contented, as he was, for the moment.

Christy, watching him sharply and of Catlin standing on second base in silence. The infield began to call encouragement, but the freshman captain's voice was still.

Dan shifted his cap. Steve, he knew, had talked him into this chance. The catcher was crouched behind the batsman, his left slightly back, his fingers telegraphing a signal for a fast ball.

It was, Dan thought, keen thinking. They knew him for a slow-baller, they'd be expecting a slow ball, and he'd cross his fingers and hope he'd hit the span the ball high and toward the inside corner.

The batter rumbled a solid hit through the infield.

"Students will happen," Steve called lightly, and signaled for a slow pitch.

Dan knew, even so he threw, that the ball was perfect. It floated with a luring, luring, luring motion. The batter sent it on a line into left field.

Steve's face rebelled. Dan went cold inside. They had hit his fast ball and his faster. He saw the catcher jerking his arm slowly. It was an old signal—head's up.

Dan gripped the ball carefully, took a full wind-up, and sent the slow drop toward the plate. Another student.

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"Never mind," Christy called cheerfully.

"Didn't I knock 'em dead?" Dan came home.

But the taste of failure was bitter on his lips. Steve had fought Catlin and Pat Ch. for him, and look what he had gained in return. Three pitched balls. The appearance of a loss of an open mound. Well, the coach's mind was probably closed now, and he couldn't blame him.

He wanted to be away in his car, driving toward the home where they'd welcome him without a question and never show a trace of doubt. But he couldn't let the loss of a loss. It wasn't in him to cover his face. And so he stayed in the outfield until the practice was over, and followed the team back to the gym.

"What was the matter with me?" he asked Steve.

"You had everything," Steve answered promptly. "You were never better. It happened to be your day to hit. There, have hit anybody?"

"Who'll believe that?"

"You believe it," the catcher said, "and I believe it too."

"What was failure save a momentary slip? And how easy it was to pick yourself up again when a grand friend like Steve laid out a helping hand!"

Chapter Five

CHRISTY pitched the first game against the Orange freshmen, and scored a 6-0 shut-out. Four days later came the contest in a close 1-4 battle. Christy drew the assignment for the third game, and faced Lee Military Academy. The cadets didn't get a runner past first base. The coach began to congratulate itself that in Christy it had picked a curly wisp.

Meanwhile, Dan Crosby went through the drab routine of the man who is not quite good enough to get the game he is set on the bench. He had no such done at Eldridge, a stoical, relaxed, almost forgotten figure. On practice days he warmed up with Haley and pitched to the batters. He was a good pitcher, he slaughtered his shorts and bends, but the shadow of that first failure lay over him. Once, in practice, he held the ball so long that the coach called him out after he had never again in the game that afternoon he found Steve red-faced and angry, in violent argument with Catlin and a group of players. Steve's voice roared him.

"Why don't you be fair? If he was Pat Ch—"

Catlin called.

"Chris, Crosby."

The greeting silenced Steve. Dan drove back to Eldridge that day chewing thoughts that were touched with pain. Jim sat in a kitchen musing a blackened and swollen.

"Will you look at him?" Kay demanded. "Whatever it will be next I don't know."

"Lighting," Mrs. Crosby said to Dan. "Rolling around the sidewalk with another boy and keeping the whole neighborhood in a turmoil."

"Dan, one of the kids and you couldn't be such a hot pitcher, else I wouldn't you get to pitch a game. I couldn't make anything like that, could I? Anyway, I wouldn't have this black eye only for a lucky punch. When are you going to pitch, Dan?"

"Some day," said Dan. His jaw was set.

"Is that all the fault you're going to find with him?" Kay demanded indignantly. "You wonder how that boy with a senior was without a black eye, with Christy and Kraft beating him the mound. It was as though Martin, having found two winning barrels, was spending the rest of the game on One. When Kraft showed signs of weakening, Dan was rushed to the ball

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The Croshys were sitting down to supper when he walked into the dining room. Tom was the first one to see his face.

"What is it, Dan?" he asked quietly. "It must be good news by the looks of you."

"I pitched today," said Dan. "You won't," Kay demanded breathlessly.

"Four to nothing."

"Of course Dan would win," Mrs. Croshy said calmly.

"Jim scrambled out of his chair. 'You shot 'em out? Did you, Dan? That's great!' All at once he looked for the shoe. 'Wait! until I tell that to Butch.'"

"Butch?" The name was new to Dan.

"Aw," said Pete, "that's the kid who gave him the black eye."

In ten minutes Jim was back. "I'm through with that guy," he announced darkly. "Do you know what he did, Dan?" He said I was a liar."

Kay was apprehensive. "Jim Croshy, if I find you were in another fight—"

"There wasn't any fight. Benet there wasn't." Jim bit into a slice of bread. "He ran too fast."

Next day Dan found himself no longer a second-string man. Martin told him to work with Steve, and thereafter he lined up with Christy and Kraft. From Haley's glove to Steve's was only thirty feet across the grass, but those thirty feet represented the building of a champion.

"Only about ten minutes," Martin ordered Dan. "Just enough to shake out the kinks."

Kraft, working gingerly, pitched a few balls and gave up. With the sore arm in a sweater he watched the work.

"Dan's taken a load off Martin's mind," he announced. "I guess Coach can breathe easier now."

Dan threw a slow ball to Steve.

"Mart was on thin ice," Kraft went on, "with only one pitcher to use against Tech."

"One was enough for Rogers," Christy said boldly.

"Oh, I don't mean we'd need a relief man," Kraft hastened to say. "But suppose we do? It doesn't hurt to have Dan ready to start in."

"Go hang your crepe somewhere else," Christy retorted in ill humor. His next words were to Dan. "I'm darned if I

know how you get away with that dinky slow ball."

"I'm surprised myself," Dan growled. "S' a mystery." He threw the slow drop, and it broke beautifully.

"There's the ball that will beat any team," Steve called.

"Don't understand it," Dan said successfully, and grinned faintly when Christy grinned.

Dan's ten minutes were up, and he dropped out. Martin cut the practice short by a half hour and led the team back to the gym.

"I have a note from Luby," he an-



Rabbit: "And I heard that swishing produced a graceful and beautiful figure."

nounced. "Most of you will turn out for varsity baseball next spring, and Luby's coming to give you a talk Wednesday night at 8 o'clock. I'd advise you to keep that date in mind."

Dan had heard about Luby. When Luby and jump, you jumped. If Luby called practice for three o'clock, the man who came in at five minutes after found himself barred for the day. No nonsense about Luby.

On Wednesday Martin made another announcement. "Don't forget—Luby tonight at eight. That doesn't mean an after. If you have a movie date, break it. The man who doesn't show up tonight will find he has lost his own throat."

Dan was tempted to remain at State in order to take no chances. But he had promised Kay to repair a screen door that afternoon, and after a period of indecision he backed the car out from behind the chemical laboratory and turned it toward Eldridge. Before he reached home the sky darkened, and while he

worked on the door rain began to fall. Jim hovered nearby.

"I'll bet you're a big shot at State now."

"No," said Dan. "I'm just a small potato."

"After pitching a shut-out?" Jim was shrilly inquisitive. "What's the matter with 'em? Don't they know how good you are?"

"I'm afraid not," Dan said dryly. Dan left the house at 7 o'clock. Rain was still falling, but it seemed slow traveling. Well, even so he'd make State at 7:30. If he got a flat he could fix it and still be there on time.

He drove the car across the bridge, turned into the state highway, and opened the throttle a little. A misty road swam underneath the car, and then, suddenly, at the first bend, another car came speeding toward him, swinging wide.

There was only one thing to do—get out of the way. He stepped on the gas, and his ancient wheel leaped to the side of the road. There was an abrupt, sick feeling of helplessness, and he knew that he was off the concrete and sliding into the ditch. Something snapped with a sharp splintering sound. The car sagged and settled on one side, and was motionless.

Dan got out. A front wheel had broken and lay, half bent, under the axle.

"I'll just get to Luby's meeting tonight," he said aloud.

He stood there in frowning contemplation of the wreck. If a man had a valid excuse, it wasn't so bad. Lights gleamed from a house a hundred yards up the road. He walked ahead. If they had a telephone he was all right. There was a telephone, and the Psi Chi house asked for Steve.

"Steve is out," a voice answered. "Well—is Christy Amer there?"

"Christy here." He heard a call: "Christy! Telephone!" Then a familiar voice said: "Hello."

"Christy, this is Dan. I was on my way over, and a wild driver forced me off the road, and wrecked my car with a broken wheel. I'll have to send for a wrecker and stay with the car until the wrecker comes. Tell 'em, will you. Tell them I was on my way."

"Sure," said Christy.

(To be continued in the September number of THE AMERICAN BOY.)

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"Ah! Red Horn! He whose mother was our Chief's sister. A good man; a kind man! Yes, surely he will help us," Mad Wolf exclaimed.

The women, adding handfuls of roasted corn to plates of the roast elk ribs, passed them to us. So eager were we for the cornas bulks that we ate them first.

Sahkath continued talking with his cousin, and we learned that the South Katalani were at their favorite camping place, on a large plain two days' ride to the north, and were there going to have their annual Sun Lodge ceremonies. The North Katalani were at a large lake still farther north, catching fish to dry for winter use.

When we had finished eating, a number of the principal men of the camp came in to visit with Sahkath. The talk of the circle went on and on. Mad Wolf and I finally lay down upon our couch, covered carelessly with our blankets, and slept.

Of all in the camp, my almost-brother and I were first up in the morning. We hurried to the lake to bathe. Upon returning to the lodge, we found there another circle of the important men of the camp. They were uneasy about the war party that had

wounded me, and strongly advised that we remain with them until they were ready to go to the South Katalani ceremonies, some days hence.

But Mad Wolf declared that he could not delay the quest of his sister, of his mother's death. He wanted to go on at once, and I sided with him.

Sahkath smiled, shook his head. "Hard-headed, you young ones!" he exclaimed. "They are right, my relatives—that war party is without doubt somewhere near. But have your way about this. We will go as soon as we finish eating."

WE soon finished. The women of the lodge gave us a quantity of roasted cornas and pemmican—prophesying the while that we would never eat it; that it would be discovered by the enemy, sure to ambush us somewhere along the trail. The whole camp gathered to see us off, protesting our going to the very last.

We rode fast up the long prairie, and some ten miles north of the camp again entered heavy timber, gloomy, forbidding, at least to Mad Wolf and me. Sahkath seemed not to mind it. We found no fresh horse tracks in the trail, and it seemed unlikely that the war party was ahead of us. But my turn and asking shoulder prevented me from loosing ap-

prehension of danger somewhere near. All of that long day we rodeled on and on through heavy timber. Toward evening, we struck a small stream running northward, and at sunset we turned off the trail and made camp upon its banks. Sahkath, I worried my mind with balmsap; we ate some pemmican and then lay down and slept. I sat fitfully, because of my throbbing shoulder.

So was it that, some midnight, by the stars, I heard the far-off, faint thud of heavy feet! They came nearer, louder, up the trail. With my heart beating fast, I leaped up, close beside me, told him that riders were coming.

"Ah!" he answered, sitting up and reaching for his rifle, and then in turn answering Sahkath, who sprang up at once, rifle in hand, asking, "What is it?"

"Riders! Coming up the trail!" I answered.

"No. One rider," he said, and was right; for there was but a steady, untroubled trotting of one animal.

"Come, we will go out and learn who he is, if an enemy, kill him," Mad Wolf proposed.

(To be concluded in the September number of THE AMERICAN BOY.)

Hide-Rack

(Continued from page 20)

side, plainly asking me questions. "I saved my hand towards the horses. "Go get 'em!" I yelled. I waited long enough to see the big red-gold dog racing towards the horses, to see Red and Ruby throw up their tails and prance to meet him, eager for the morning frolic. A frolic that was a lot more serious than they knew.

Then I turned and raced across the field, mean top and scrambled down into the main canyon at a place about two hundred yards beyond the rustlers' camp. I could see that the men had just got up and were eating breakfast.

Crouching behind the trunk of a big yellow pine I began to whistle with all my might—the whistle that called Hide-rack into camp. As I whistled I prayed that the big red dog could hear me.

Still whistling strenuously I peeped from behind the tree and could see that the rustlers had jumped to their feet and were looking intently in my general direction, their faces worried. They didn't see me, and they didn't know what to do. One of them started forward to investigate.

At that moment the narrow mouth of the little box canyon behind them suddenly filled with a flying wedge of horse-flesh, led by a big racing colic.

Springing full into view, I waved my arms and screamed to attract the dog's attention — and trembled for fear he would stop at the camp. But on he came, swift as a flash, straight for me, with Red and Ruby hard on his tail. The dumfounded men looked open-jawed at me until they were almost run down by a sweeping tide of horses. Then they stomped like so many rabbits for the brush.

On the horses came, thundering through the camp, scattering bedding, pots and pans, and guns, right and left, while the panic-stricken rustlers dodged behind trees and rocks and brush.

Hide-rack stopped between my legs. Red and Ruby pulled up just short of running me down. I grabbed Red's dangling mane and flung myself on his back. Guiding the big Morgan with my knees I sent him to the rear of the band and began to haze the horses away from the wrecked camp. Hide-rack helped, and in less time than it takes to tell it, the bunch was racing pell-mell through the canyon, with the big dog barking joyously at their heels and Red, with me on his back, leaping easily along behind.

I heard curses and yells from the rustlers. A rifle cracked and a bullet whined over my head. I just burned my face in Red's mane and dug my heels deeper into his ribs.

At last a bend in the canyon hid us from the thieves' view. I counted the horses. There were three new ones in the bunch and I knew the rustlers were afoot. I pushed the horses hard and arrived at the cabin shortly after noon. Afraid that the rustlers might follow, I saddled and packed two of the horses quickly and in less than an hour was on my way to the ranch in the Snake River valley.

I was two days behind schedule when I arrived at the wintering grounds and Dad had begun to be uneasy. Boy, was he relieved when I hazed the bunch through the big wire fence!

"Why the delay, Chet?" he questioned. I told him the whole story from start to finish, and when I had finished he threw his arm about my shoulder in a manner that made me feel very proud. Then he looked at the big red-gold dog.

"Come here, Hide-rack," he said, and took his arm from my shoulder to take the colicky intelligent face in his two hands. "If you ever turn another hair, old fellow," he promised, "you've earned your keep for the rest of your life!"

And Hide-rack wagged his tail vigorously, as if he knew just exactly what my father was saying.

"A Price on Hide-Rack"

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The Strikeout King

(Continued from page 13)

he turned from the couch and walked out the field, unaware of the cheers that followed him.

As he drove near the gym he hastened his steps. He hurried through his shower and rubdown, dressed as swiftly as he could, and strode out of the building, waving a brisk hello to the trainer.

When he reached the street he sighed with relief. He hadn't wanted to meet the press, coming in from the field. He didn't want to see Don, the coach, or any of them. He wanted to be alone, to figure out what had happened.

He was analyzing the play he explored the muscles of his right arm. He could feel a slight ache there—an ache in one of the muscles of the upper arm, close to the elbow.

"It's nothing," he said aloud. "Nothing at all."

But as he lay in bed that night, gnawing sleepily at the collar, he knew that he could not ignore it longer. He had strained his arm. The throbs in his arm played an impish tune to which String kept repeating two words: "Nothing serious—nothing serious." But he knew that was serious.

DURING the next week, while the doctor made periodic examinations of his arm, String's hopes gradually began rising. The ache had disappeared and his elbow wasn't visibly swollen. He might conceivably get into shape for the season in the few days that remained. Whistling to keep up his courage, he went to Coach Hendricks' office to get the final verdict. In the hall he paid his respects to Bull Donnelly.

"You can't come out yet, Bull," he said grimly.

The coach was seated at his desk, and he gestured String to a chair.

"The doctor says you can pitch," Hendricks said.

String sat bolt upright, his eyes wide.

"Is that straight?" he asked, in a small voice.

"No more curves," the coach added.

"No what?"

"Throwing too many curves strained your arm," the coach said quietly.

"Not to try to lay off for the rest of the season."

"But," String blurted out, "take away my curve and you might as well cut off my arm."

"It's not as bad as you think," the coach said. "You've got your control and change of pace—investing in your feet."

String leaped impatiently to his feet.

"I'm serious about that!" he cried out.

"If my curve is out, so am I, and I might as well face it. I'll quit now."

"Sit down, String." The coach's words were more veiled, but stern.

In his face made String drop slowly into a chair. "Did it ever occur to you that when you abused your curve you were throwing down the school?"

"Meaning the words penetrated to String's whirling thoughts, and he flushed.

"I tried to warn you, but you were so sure about chasing a rainbow, you wouldn't listen. Weren't you trying to break Bull Donnelly's record?"

String looked up, surprised, and then slowly nodded his head.

"I know now that you chance to beat Bull's record is gone, you want to quit cold. Is that it?"

String sat crumpled in his chair, staring at his feet. He hadn't looked at it quite in that way.

"You can still be of service to your team," the coach said. "Even without your curve, you're better than nobody."

String recalled yes. "I'll stick it," he said.

On the way to Southern University, String played a two-game series with Leighton. Farrell pitched the first game and it, but he was the umpire and didn't wear sky blue. It was State's first de-

feat of the season, and put her a half game behind Southern.

Two days later Farrell was again on the mound for the first game of the Southern series, and came out on top in a six-game set, 9 to 7. In the hotel lobby after the game, Coach Hendricks drew String aside.

"Think you can do it?" he asked.

String hesitated before replying. Since that interview in the hotel ten days ago, he had taken regular light workouts. He had improved his control and had developed a deceptive change of pace. But his fast ball had little hop and he was still a bit off. He could, without those two weapons he had no confidence.

"I'll do my best," he said, in a subdued tone.

Hendricks looked at String a moment before speaking. "You and Pike have never got along," he said, "but I want you to pitch to him tomorrow. We're going to need his strength at bat. Don didn't make a hit today."

"Poke it is," String replied mechanically.

When String warmed up before the game the next afternoon, he was in a fairly trim mood. All season he had looked forward to a day like this—a sunny day with a faint breeze, the stands filling with rosters, and a Green Sox scout looking on. The scout was here—a man named Kennedy—but String was no longer interested in him. The only thing in the world he wanted to do was to win the game, to keep State and keep State in the running for the championship.

As String went to the bench for his third at-bat during at bat, this day of hope filtered down through his overcast spirit. And the ray came from Pike.

"These fellows have heard about your stroke ball," Pike said, "and they're probably laying for it."

String looked doubtfully at the catcher.

"A man who times himself to hit a fast ball has trouble with a slow one," Pike went on.

A slender ray—but it was something. With a shade more confidence, String watched his pitcher, and Pike and Tilton go on deck. The bench started talking it up.

"Come on you, two," Waddy called.

"A flock of 'em," yelled Hadden.

STATE started with a rush, intent on driving in the crowd. String threw the plate for a walk. Tilton singled off the first ball pitched, sending Baker to third. Manning grounded out, but Waddy made a double that cleared the bases. The scoring ended there, but when String walked to the mound for the second half of the inning there was a lump in his throat. His team was in a fighting mood, ready to make it a close game. He was calling out encouragement to him as they never had in the days when his curve had made their lives unnecessary.

Southern's first batter was in the box, his eyes on String, his stick held high and his body bent almost over the plate.

Pike signaled for a pitch squarely over the middle of the plate. String felt a feeling of panic. In that instant, he knew that this game was going to be an ordeal such as he'd never faced before. With an effort he mastered himself and threw. The ball cut the heart of the plate, and the batter didn't offer.

Pike called next for a faster over the inside corner, and String leaped it. The umpire called it a ball. String got up, the umpire called it a ball. Again String lobbed for the inside corner and again the batter passed it up, but this time it was good.

The batter showed his annoyance by

taking a new holdout at the plate and waving his bat. String gave a slight nod in response to Pike's sign and proceeded to aim a pitch over the outside, low. The batter looked at it, decided at the last minute it might be good, and, uncharacteristically, he swung to the second baseman for the first out.

String wiped a few beads of sweat from his eyes and looked over the second baseman. He was a rangy, powerfully built player, and to String he had looked as big as a tennis racket. Pike was squinting behind the plate, eliciting encouragement.

"Rights over the middle—he can't hit it."

String wound up and delivered his slow ball. The batter shortened his grip and dumped the pitch into the ground for a perfect burn.

"Never read that," yelled Pike. "The next two are easy."

IN obedience to the signal, String attempted to feed the third man a fast strike past the handle of his bat, but to his dismay he found the ball angling sharply over the middle. There was a loud crack, and the ball sailed out to the fence beyond the left fielder. The man on first roared all the way home and the batter pitched out at second.

"Now, the slaughter starts," String said to himself. "Without my curve I'm just another pitcher."

Pike looked out to String.

"Never mind that last pitch," he said.

"You grooved it and he was laying for it. Just keep firing at the corners and we'll get this next guy. He can't touch."

String drew a breath and nodded. "You've 'em and I'll put 'em there."

"That's talking," Pike said warmly. String barely glanced at the next man.

He knew it was Rod Walker, second baseman in the Green Sox line-up, and that Walker might well drive one of those limping pitches out of the park.

But he resolutely removed the latter from his mind and concentrated on the pitch.

"Blah and inside," he said to himself. "Here goes."

The pitch went straight to his mark for the third strike.

"He doesn't want 'em there," String said to himself. "He likes to take a full swing."

String put his second one too far outside for the batter to reach, but his third one again out the inside corner for a strike. Walker swung his bat impatiently.

"He doesn't like 'em, but he knows he may have to hit 'em," String said dejectedly.

Again he aimed a faster inside, and in desperation he threw the two sides of the ball. The ball popped off the handle of his bat, and String himself caught it for the second out of the inning.

The pitcher felt a glow of pleasure and relief. It felt like the days of his devastating curve.

The next man up sent a long fly to Bob Waddy for the third out, and String walked Kennedy. He had never before noticed with surprise that his hand was trembling.

"Good going," Pike said to him.

"Good going," String amended.

"It's just a matter of never giving 'em anything good to hit at," Pike said confidently. "If we can't dazzle 'em with speed we'll befuddle 'em with accuracy."

During the second inning, String dumped the ball over the center of the plate. His target was a rectangle, with Pike's knees and shoulders at the four corners, and he aimed at the center of the rectangle.

Up and down those two edges, first on one side and then the other, now fast, now slow, he did his share.

Sharply, and Southern could get a few more out.

But at the end of the inning String

knew that if overpitching wasn't hard on the arm, it was wearing to the nerves. He felt already as though he had been through a zine-zining game.

In the third inning, his control momentarily broke. The first Southern batter hit a grounder, first baseman at shortstop, and Baker proceeded to play flicks with the ball. The second and third men walked, filling the bases.

Robbing a sweating pitch down the side of his pants, String walked forward to meet Pike. The catcher's mouth was set.

"You're losing your nerve," Pike charged, "everything you pitch is going just outside. You've got to get back on those corners. You can do it."

"This isn't my game," String murmured. "I've never done anything like this before."

"You did fire the second inning," Pike came back, "and you can do just as well now." He looked around at the three Southern corners, who nodded and began. "It's a good spot for a double play. We'll let the next man hit."

String looked to see who the next man would be, and he was surprised to recognize Rod Walker as the second turn at bat. Pike noticed the glance and shrugged his shoulder.

"He isn't so tough," he said, calmly. "He likes 'em low and inside."

"How do you know?" String asked uneasily.

"Because you pitched a wide one to him the last time, and he started to reach for it." Pike was smiling confidently. "Give him the same thing you gave him last time—high ones on the inside."

THEY parted, summoning all his control. String fed Walker a floater on the inside. A second and a third one followed in the Green Sox line-up, called two of their strikes. A fourth one—fast, this time—went to the same mark, and the enraged Walker swung.

The last ball he had swung bounced off the catcher's third and second. Manning at third dashed to his left to field it, but the sphere rolled out to the grass.

String scored. One gleeful Southern man was reeling on third and Walker was at first.

"Horsehoes," Baker yelled derisively. "We'll get these two quick, Pike!"

"Not your fault, String!"

String wet his lips. It was his fault. If he hadn't walked those two men nobody would have scored. His mouth set grimly.

He had never before been so tired and lost control, but he wouldn't lose control again.

With the next batter, his pitches were sharp, the edges of the edges of the rectangle, and the man finally grounded weakly to Holden at second for a double play. While the double play was being completed, the man on first was out, and that ended the scoring for the inning.

String collapsed weakly on the bench and closed his eyes. He wondered idly if Kennedy, Green Sox scout, thought of the exhibition.

"Not," he murmured to himself, "that it makes any difference."

He felt a hand on his arm and opened his eyes to find the coach sitting next to him.

"You're doing a good job, String." There was warmth in the coach's voice, and String smiled at it appreciatively.

"He wasn't fooled by the remark—it was a pretty rotten exhibition. But he was grateful, just the same."

"How do you feel?" the coach asked.

"Fine. I feel fine. I feel fine. I feel fine," String replied frankly.

"Is it your arm?"

"No—your arm? I let myself go that last time, and I'm sure that's the last time I'll let myself go. I'm sure that's the last time I'll let myself go. I'm sure that's the last time I'll let myself go."

"But I'm all right now."

In her half of the fourth inning, State indulged in a batting spree that led the score to 4-0. And in the morning, the hot-followed String, much steadfastly to his task of keeping the Southern sluggers guessing. In the sixth, the Southern coach on the third-base line brushed his hands.

"Come on, go!" he yelled, "this boy hasn't got a thing."

String looked at his shoes and smiled. So they'd found it out at last! If it hadn't been for Puke's untimely signal calling, he reflected, they would have known it long ago.

After that his job grew harder. The Southerners began stepping back to nudge the inside pitcher and reaching across the plate to batter the outside ones. In every inning, Southern got men on base. For String, existence became a succession of guesses, each one of which bruised his spirit and shattered his nerves. Where once he had been able to save himself with a blinding smoke ball on an unshakable curve, he now had to achieve the same end with a duster that cut the corner, or a change of pace that threw the batter off time.

He didn't quite keep Southern from scoring. In both the sixth and seventh innings, Southern got a man across, bringing her total to six runs. But in State's half of the ninth a triple by Hamilton cleared the stacks and put State one run in the lead, and String walked out for his last inning with the knowledge that Southern wasn't scared.

It seemed to String as he faced the first batter that he'd been standing on that mound for a week, and that there was nothing left to him but a ragged loop of raw nerves. Once again he kept the painful job of cutting holes in the corners of the rectangle, but after two pitches he knew that his control had gone wobbly. Before he could master himself, he had passed the first batter.

TIME infielders pelted encouragement at him, but under their cheerfulness String detected a note of strain. He looked over at the first base, saw Farrell warming up, and felt an overwhelming desire to walk to the bench. With an effort he eliminated the thought.

"Puke's calling for a fluster," he said nimbly. "Another fluster."

He tossed the pitch, and with relief saw it go accurately for Puke's left knee. The batter topped the ball to deep short, and String's mind mechanically recorded the fact that a runner was forced out at second.

String's next pitch was just as accurately aimed at Puke's right shoulder, but the latter reached out, luckily connected, and drove the ball between second and third for a single. A fast throw in to Oberg held the advancing runner out second.

String looked at the men on first and second and felt a familiar pounding sensation in his veins. It was another attack and he was afraid he couldn't see it through. Then he looked at the plate, and the pounding in his veins increased. Hod Walker was up. String stepped off the mound and looked back at the pitcher's face.

"We need it," String said, "I think I can give you the curve."

Puke looked up quickly, and saw the desperation written in the pitcher's face. Slowly he shook his head.

"My arm feels good," String lied. "And it's almost the end of the game."

"A wild pitch is the end in a run!"

"There'll be an wild pitch!" String grasped Puke by the arm. "Remember the signals! If I give you the sign, get ready to catch the curve."

String turned to go, but Puke snarled around. "String," he pleaded. "Don't be a fool!"

String's eyes dropped to the ground and a shudder ran through his frame. "I'm shot," he murmured. "Completely shot."

"Don't worry," Puke gripped String's

arm tightly. "Listen. Can you give me just four more pitches?"

String didn't answer.

"Just four more," Puke said, "and we'll have this man out."

"All right," String said at last. "I'll give you—four pitches."

With a pat on the arm, Puke turned quickly and walked back to the plate. As he passed Walker, he grinned.

"You think you haven't seen any stuff," he said carelessly. "Well—watch this."

POKE crouched behind the plate and signaled for a high one on the inside. The ball sailed over, barely cutting the corner, shoulder high, for the first strike.

"See it?" Puke said cheerfully, and signed for another one just like it.

Again the pitch came over, but this one was a shade too far in, and the umpire called it a ball.

"What are you doing—kidding me?" Walker laughed. "Strike!"

"And here's more of the same," Puke said, but this time he called for a fast one right in Walker's groove—low and outside.

The pitch sailed straight for Puke's right knee—the first time that afternoon that Walker had been given a pitch exactly where he wanted it. The latter looked at it in amazement, unable to swing.

"Smatter?" Puke laughed. "Didn't you want it?"

For an instant Puke debated over the next pitch. He threw a quick glance at Walker and saw him shortening his grip on the bat. That decided Puke. Walker didn't expect two balls in succession in the groove.

Walker was getting ready to back up and catch at another inside ball. Puke decided to risk everything on a groove ball. He rose from his crouch and stuck out his arm.

The ball came over. Too late, Walker realized that he had been crouched up.

With his shortened grip he was unable to catch the fast delivery, and he could do was to reach out and strike weakly at the ball.

By luck he connected. The grander success to Holden on the second bounce. Holden tossed to Baker, forcing the runner at second, and Baker threw to Todd, completing the double play.

The game was over, and State had won 7 to 4. For a half minute String contemplated the miracle, too exhausted to feel elation or to respond to the pounding his teammates gave him. He was the last to enter the dressing room, and for a moment he leaned wearily against the door.

In the center of the room, Coach Hendricks was talking to a short man with a round, red face. The coach beckoned.

"String," he said, "this is Mr. Kennedy."

String's face took on color. He walked forward and shook hands diffidently. The scout's eyes quick took in String's rangy frame, his long fingers, and sinewed wrist.

"You pitched a pretty good game, son."

String laughed. If he had counted right, Southern had scored six runs and made 10 hits. And there hadn't been a single strikeout.

"I might have given a better account of myself a few weeks ago," he said, smiling.

"I saw you a few weeks ago," Kennedy's eyes were reminiscent. "I saw you pitch against Dunham, and I wasn't much impressed."

"I didn't suppose you would be," String laughed apologetically. But he was bewildered. He had blanked Dunham and struck out nine men in the bargain.

"You showed plenty of stuff," Kennedy said, "but no judgment. You weren't deceiving those Dunham men. You were overpowering 'em, and you



The Huskiest Boy in the Troop

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What a difference since he gained 10 pounds on this delicious food-drink

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The Scoutmaster took him aside. "I see you're 'all-in', Herbert," he said. "That's because you lack endurance. I'll tell you how to build yourself up."

He then explained about Cocomalt mixed with milk, how delicious it is, how it aids to put on pounds of weight, how it helps to build strong bones, sound teeth. He told Herbert promise to drink it regularly for at least thirty days.

In one month Herbert was getting as husky and strong as any Scout in the Troop—and in six weeks he had gained ten pounds. He's won four new Merit Badges and he's been made a Patrol Leader. Ask him what made the change. He'll tell you in one word: "Cocomalt!"

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hurts—ah! it's hurts! now. Yussit, I'm gon' to invent a way as the doctors kin cut folks an' put in a bullet. Then they kin tell when a sinner's comin'."

"That's so," agreed the boy, so solemnly that all trace of the old man's testiness disappeared.

In the early gray of the following morning the two struck out on the trail of McNair and Britton. During the previous afternoon Connie had fastened two pairs of snow "glasses" out of birch bark, smoked on one side, and with narrow eye slits cut on the other, to guard against snow blindness in the endless white expanse of the lake.

As the morning wore on a cloudless sky, bringing out sharply the high hills that bordered the northern shore. The going was good on the wind-packed snow. They discarded their snowshoes, and at noon they crossed a huge snow ridge at the point where McNair and Britton had chopped a sleazy way among the upended cakes of ice. The trail the men were following was plain, and they made good time.

Toward the middle of the afternoon the wind picked up, whipping first from one quarter, then another. There was no apparent gathering of clouds, yet the cold sunlight waned, as though the atmosphere were gradually thickening.

The drifting surface of snow dulled the sun, low in the southwest, pale, and its outlines became distorted until it resembled a dull yellow pumpkin. Then it faded altogether from sight even though it wasn't time for setting. The wind settled into the northeast and stiffened until, at times, it slued the sled almost at right angles to the dogs.

Old Man Mattie drew alongside Connie and shouted in his ear "I know it's you comin'!" My bullet don't lie."

The boy pointed ahead to where, in the far distance, the outline of a pressure ridge was just visible.

"We'll camp there," he yelled, to make himself heard above the roar of the ever increasing wind. "We can rig some kind of shelter with ice cakes."

"Be lucky if we get there!" cried the older, making a dive for the tall rope.

"Run, them dogs! Here comes the snow!"

CONNIE yelled at Leloo, flicked his team lead with his whip, and the wind flamed into a strong, steady run. Struggling over his shoulder the boy saw at a glance that the old man was right. To the north-eastward, approaching at express train speed, was what seemed to be a towering wall of white. Already dust particles filled the air, gathered in tiny clouds, and went spinning and swirling across the surface of the lake.

Connie urged the dogs to greater speed. The pressure ridge was almost invisible now, and there was no possible way of gauging its distance. It might be only four or five feet high and a mile away, or it might be twenty feet high and five miles distant.

Then the storm struck in all its demagogical fury. In a single instant they were enfolded in a whirling, blinding smother of white. Snow, like fog, filled the air. It seemed to take the place of air, dogging the nostrils, biting into the lungs when they drew need of breath—the two sucked it as though through their mouths. The dogs were invisible. Only Old Man Mattie, hanging to the tall rope, was in sight, scarcely three feet in front of Connie and the old man was only a dark blur in the enveloping smother.

Speeding up, Connie passed the old man without his realizing it, passed the sled, passed the string of dogs until he reached Leloo. Grouping the great white wolf dog by the collar, Connie dragged him to a stance. As from a great distance he heard the voice of the ancient who had tripped and fallen over the sled.

"What thearnation dog-gone thing happens a now!"

Connie reached the older's side in time to help him to his feet. "It's all

right!" he shouted. "I stopped the dogs. We've got to get out our mufflers to breathe through, or we'll die. This snow will freeze our lungs!"

"Fine place you picked out for to open them packs!" screeched the older. "You can't see nuthin', an' if you could it would be bleered away 'fore you could grab it!"

"I've got two mufflers and I know right where they are," yelled Connie. "You stand there!"

FIVE minutes later he forced a long wooden muffler into the old man's hands. Each wrapped a scarf about his head and Connie again shouted into the old man's ear.

"The trail's gone. I'll take a compass course and march ahead of the dogs till I hit the ridge. You hang onto the tail rope."

For an hour the boy plodded through the opaque white smother. Twice he halted and consulted his compass, each time changing his course slightly. He was traveling for the most part "on the wind," but well he knew that too much confidence cannot be placed in wind directions. Winds often shift suddenly.

Progress was slow. Dogged plodding had taken the place of the swift run of the team. Then, suddenly, the boy grunted against a slanting ice cake. The team halted, and Old Man Mattie stood at his side as he regained his feet.

"Unharness the dogs," shouted the boy, "and I'll chop up some cakes for a shelter."

Reaching the ice, Connie attacked the slanting ice cake that had tripped him. After much labor he trimmed it into three sections. With Old Man Mattie's help, he arranged the slabs into a triangular shelter, over the top of which he spread the tarp that covered their sled.

The arrangement of the tarp wasn't easy. Added to the absolute blackness of the night was the thick snow. Time and again, the tarp was whipped by the howling wind from one pair of hands and hastily saved by the other. More ice cakes had to be chopped with which to weight the edges of the wind-whipped tarp. Finally the job was done, and wet with sweat, despite the stinging cold, both crawled gratefully into the shelter, after carrying in most of the contents of the sled.

Breaking out a fish spiece from the scanty supply, Connie wriggled from the shelter, called the dogs, which had already found cozy niches behind upended cakes, and tossed each his fish.

"Too bad, old-timer," he said. "We're all going short, this time. When we hit the north shore we'll kill a caribou."

For supper Connie and Old Man Mattie dozed until owl. They got a rolled only one had become their cramped quarters wouldn't permit the unrolling of two. Though they had no fire, they both stretched to their knees and changed clothing. The man who sleeps damp in the northern cold doesn't sleep for many nights. His friends, if any, bury him and call it pneumonia.

"Too bad, old-timer," he said. "We're all going short, this time. When we hit the north shore we'll kill a caribou."

Both slept his dead men. When Connie awoke and glanced at his watch by the light of a match, it was nine o'clock. He sat up but was as dark as a pocket. Without stirring the old man, he crept to the tarp-closed doorway and peered out. Whirling snow filled his eyes and melted on his warm cheeks. His gaze couldn't penetrate the edifying white fog. Lowering and weighting the tarp, he crept back into bed without disturbing Old Man Mattie.

The next thing he knew, he awakes coughing. He opened his eyes and immediately closed them again. They stung with the sting of wood smoke. He opened them a sliver, and glanced about him. The interior of the howe was lighted by a flickering reddish glow. Through a haze of smoke the boy made out the form of Old Man Mattie, hunched on his knees beside a small fire built close behind the doorway, from which he had removed the tarp. The

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at Resolution, an' when we come back we'll stop there an' fix him up credit with the factor. Let's get gone." We want to make it scrost that boy before night—an' we got to go some to do it."

Three days later, after striking inland at a point midway between the bay and Fort Resolution, the two picked up the trail of McNair and Britton, who were following Old Man Mattie's map. The trail was several days old. Evidently the two fugitives had succeeded in crossing the lake before the storm caught them.

Toward evening Connie succeeded in shooting an old bull caribou, the first game they had killed. The animal was lean and ill-conditioned, but they camped, fed the dogs liberally on meat, and bailed a huge chunk for themselves. They had already nearly finished the last of the quarters they had procured from the Indians.

"Gosh sakes but he's tough!" cried Mattie, wringing a chunk of the meat with his energy teeth. "It's like eating a rubber boot. A man can't even chew the gravy! I bet, though, if a man could get some of it it would stay by him. And one like him before, an' by Jicky I hanker af a smelt in the liver."

On the fourth day thereafter, Mattie halted with a dry, cackling chuckle, and pointed to the mouth of a small feeder that entered, through a sharp cleft in the rock, the larger river they were following.

"They've passed what they're hantler fer," he concluded. "Yusur, my cache is right there. This here's the river where I got out the dust. They been walkin' over the top of the gravel that's plumb loose with gold—an' they don't know it. From here on they ain't gold no place, an' when that map runs out on 'em, like it must of by now, we'll find 'em diggin' around in the snow hantler a cache that ain't there."

The following morning the two came upon the fresh trail of a small band of caribou that had crossed the river from east to west. Between the dogs, that struck out on the trail, and a mile farther on found the animals feeding on the side of a ridge skirting a small beaver meadow. Crossing the ridge, they worked upward and came out squarely above the feeding deer. They succeeded in knocking over three of the herd. Here was meat—and to spare. There were no old bulls among the three animals that went down at the crack of the rifles.

While the old man proceeded with the butchering Connie returned for the dogs. Nightfall found them with plenty of strength-giving meat for the journey to Fort Smith with their captives, and more than a hundred pounds to cache for their return to the herrens.

Picking up the trail of McNair and Britton early the following morning, the two held steadily to it for two days. On the morning of the third day they proceeded more cautiously, Connie following with the dogs while the older hunter for ahead.

TOWARD the middle of the afternoon, Connie saw the old man signaling to him, and as agreed, he toggled the dogs and advanced alone. From the top of the sparsely wooded rock ridge they peered down into the valley of a creek. Not fifty yards away a shelter tarp had been rigged close against a spruce cogen. The smoke rose from a fire in front of the tarp. A man sat humped up beside the fire above which a kettle swung. Three lean dogs lay curled near-by in the snow.

As the two looked, one of the dogs rose to its feet and staggered toward the fire sniffing at the kettle. The man picked up a chunk of wood and barked full against the ribs of the dog which, with a short yelp of pain, waded a few steps away and sank down in the snow.

"He's about hushed," whispered the older. "He's eatin' dog. But—where's the other one?"

"I don't know," answered Connie, his

eyes hardening, "but we'll soon find out." He swung his rifle into position, but before he had time to call out, there was a rattle in the spruce cogen, and a queer procession emerged.

Two dogs pulling a sled—dogs that seemed more energetic than those by the fire—and on the sled a clumsily butchered half-caribou of caribou. Behind the sled, staggering slightly, his clothes torn and bedraggled, Constable McNair.

The man by the fire leaped up, hunched forward with the single cry: "Food!" And then a strange scene was enacted. Connie and Old Man Mattie, from their hiding places, saw Constable McNair lift his rifle and point it at Britton. McNair's words came clearly to them:

"You tried to kill me last night to save food, and now I'm through. You're going back with me—back to Fort Smith."

Britton, crying the caribou hungrily, was unrelenting. "You can't take me back now," he wheedled. "How kin you explain where you been?"

"I'm not going to explain. They'll be a lot more fair than you were last night."

"Aw, now, you misunderstood. Wait'll we eat, an' maybe yer senses will come back. We'll find that cache yet, an' everything'll be like we planned."

AS Britton spoke he edged backward, A, sniping his eyes, catlike, upon McNair. And McNair unconsciously advanced, looking always at Britton, never glancing at the ground before him. Then it was that Connie saw, just in front of McNair's feet, a little area of ice, where cooking water had been thrown. It happened before Connie could shoot.

McNair slipped and threw out his arms to save himself. Britton bounded back to the fire, grasped his rifle, and fired. McNair, on his knees, swayed backward from the force of the hit and slowly straggled again, his posture from his breast. Then his own rifle came slowly to his shoulder. Britton's face turned suddenly to a mask of abject fear.

McNair's rifle harked sharply in the cold air. With a crazy whirl Britton crumpled into the snow, and the mounted policeman slowly and wearily slumped forward on his face, arms outstretched.

They were both dead when Connie and Old Man Mattie reached the little camp at the creek bottom. But Connie, kneeling over the body of Constable McNair, found his thoughts going back to his first clash with McNair, and his later plea to Cartwright to give the rascal another chance.

"What you lookin' at?" cooed Mattie. "If you don't believe he's dead, feel his pulse."

"He's dead all right," answered the guy gravely. "I was just wondering what to do. We could take the two bodies on into Fort Smith—"

"That's high three hundred mile, the way we'd have to go!" interrupted the old man. "But talkin' to me. Yer the pier."

"It isn't the distance," Connie said slowly. "If we take him in, dressed as he is, there'll be a sorry story to tell. If we bury them both out here, I can put in a report—something like this: "Constable McNair found murdered by prisoner he was conducting from Fort Simpson to Fort Smith. Had followed prisoner far into barrens where he and prisoner engaged in battle that resulted in both dying. Intended to bring bodies in."

Connie looked down at the man who had been strong enough to go after caribou while Britton had remained by the fire; who had seen Britton's unworthiness; and who had been willing to go back and face the music.

"I asked Cartwright to give him another chance," he said half to himself. "It seems to me that—that he made good. What do you think?"



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We Were Tropical Tramp Engineers

(Continued from page 16)

bond over the way the water is down. It is lucky that the canoe is directly overhead for I was barely able to see the bottom. *Vamos!*"

We followed the narrow passage for some time, but finally we had to back out again. The "old Yams" was not swimming—just another little tunnel that disappeared into a mass of reeds. I was poing from the stern and would have passed the place. Diamond sustained me to step, close to the tunnel. He was up on the bow, leaning over to peer into the water.

Without raising his eyes he muttered again to me to pole ahead a bit, and a moment later he straightened up with a delighted grin.

"*Mis Jefe* (look here)!" he said, pointing.

I leaned over the side and with the aid of the little Leg Cabin lamp I saw in the mud marks that showed unmistakably that canoes had been poled about that way recently. All around us was a wall of reeds, but we knew that the canoes must be close by.

Diamond picked up his proscum lamp and, gazing intently for an overhang, he pulled himself up to a tettering perch astride of a limb. From there, he wriggled to the next limb and then to another until both he and his lamp disappeared behind a screen of reeds and rocks.

The next moment I heard a shout. "*Vesque desoche* (come straight)!"

I peered blindly into the water and, pushed through into an opening where I found Diamond calmly sitting in a big canoe with several others scattered about, tied to the overhangs.

"*Yes!*" I said. "I just called one big 'Hoo-ny!' Diamond echoed with 'co-raz!' and we both grinned.

We shifted the pole and the paddle to the left, but the water took us in other in tow. An hour later we found ourselves in the same dark passage that we had entered when we left the river.

It was broad daylight when the heavy curtain of the reed branch, swung us downstream. About noon we heard a call, and there was Yamsie watching for us, with the whole camp outfit piled on the bank behind him.

We filled ourselves with some of Domingo's good grub while everyone talked at ease. Mr. White and McCullough had been worried, but when Yamsie came and talked them about the canoes, Mr. White said he knew that with Diamond's help I would find the canoes. It was really the other way; I was the one who had them, and I wasn't much help either.

Mr. White was pretty furious at Monk and Vargas, but he didn't say much.

THE damage was piled into the boats, and the males had to swim over. A mile beyond the river, man was pitched. The "old Yams" had had it. We had lost two or three miles of progress. It made the whole crowd blue, but by the next afternoon we had all our spirits and we made more than our usual run before night.

Some days after that we came unexpectedly to a high, round, symmetrical hill. The men said it was one of the "big tops" the "old Yams" had built. There was a long line of these hills, they said, running back from the coast, and on them in the old days lived the people of the "old Yams" had built. Caricages could signal from one hill to another so that a message would pass from the coast to the interior in a half day.

When we stopped for lunch, Yamsie, Diamond and I climbed to the top of the hill. From its highest point, we could see all over the country. Yamsie pointed out Olanchito's canyon, where there was a narrow pinnacle of rock jutting up into the sky. He said

the pinnacle was called Finger Rock and that it stood right where we would have to pass to get to Olanchito. It was a long way off yet.

When we got back, we found that Mr. White and McCullough had gone back to camp earlier than their monthly report to the Kinross office, so I didn't get a chance to tell them about Finger Rock and Olanchito Canyon.

After we had discussed our rates of the day's work and then sat around talking.

"Quint's crowd can't be ahead of us," said McCullough, "or they wouldn't have taken the trouble to play that dirty trick with the canoes."

"I don't know about that," Mr. White answered thoughtfully. "They're just getting to the hardest part of their line. Quint isn't taking any chances—we're likely to hear more from him before this job's over."

"I wish I knew just how far his line is from Olanchito," said McCullough. "I can't believe that Quint's crew can keep up any such pace as ours. He has Caribs, and our 'Waikes are two to one better than his."

"Yes," answered Mr. White, not too cheerfully. "But he has a shorter line than we have and has had some of this male crowd; so he's probably nearer Olanchito than we are."

We sat for a long time without saying anything. It was unusually late when we turned in.

FOR some time I'd been getting up about midnight to see that Mr. White got his liquid midnight, which he took in the form of a drink. It was bitter. That night, it was so late that I decided to stay awake until time for my medicine; so I lay down with my clothes on. I must have been asleep, for when I awoke I noticed that the quilt's fire had died down completely and a thin moon was coming up.

On my way to the kitchen to get the coffee, I passed the line ahead of a male walking up the pier that had been cut by the machete men. It dawned on me that someone must have left the corral open and one of the males was loose.

I didn't call the boys. I had a flash light in my hand; so I ran across the clearing to get in ahead of the male. When I got to the pier I discovered that there were several males loose. They had stopped and were facing me, their eyes reflecting back the light as I turned and looked at them. As I felt, my flashlight around them, feeling exasperated with them and a little uneasy—I knew there was an occasional jaguar in that jungle.

The next morning I found a crocodile in the brush, and a black form sprang from the darkness and struck me full in the chest. My foot caught in a vine as I turned to run and together we rolled over. As I felt, my flashlight light went out and I lay face down in the easy mud. I could feel the tense body pinning me down and expected the next second to feel the teeth of a tiger.

Instead, the very hands of a man clamped suddenly over my mouth and someone else pulled my arm behind me and bound me with a rough cloth. My fear of the tiger changed to anger as a voice whispered in my ear, "No *hehles* (don't speak). That warning was useless, so the hand over my mouth pressed forward, and I felt the teeth of a tiger. It didn't prevent me from fighting as hard as I could, but I soon realized I was helpless. Another rag was tied over my mouth and I was left alone.

There was a heated argument carried on in whispers, in Carib. My captors seemed worried about what to do with me. I had, apparently, not entered into the usual Carib custom of being taken and impatiently, "*Leveselo! Leveselo!* (Take him along)!"

The males were driven by us, and I was half pushed and half dragged along the trail.

Before long we stepped in a little clearing. There were three men, all Caribs, and two horses, saddles and all. The leader motioned for us to mount one of the males. He helped me into the saddle and rode on ahead.

EVERYTHING had been done so silently that I felt sure no one in camp had heard the disturbance. At first I thought these men were horse thieves, but I soon learned that Quint's men were Caribs and I knew this was another trick to hinder us. Without the males our crew would lose hours every day. Just what I didn't want!

The further I rode—pugged, with my hands tied behind me—the madder I got! And that was all the good it did me.

We rode on and on and on.

Finally we came to the big river. They helped me dismount, and one of the men told me that if I kept quiet as I was told no harm would come to me. But if I didn't—he made an ugly motion as of throwing something into the water. I nodded my head, so he untied my hands and led me to a small hut. I undid the dirty rag tied over my mouth and noticed it went into a canoe. It took two trips to get the males across the river.

When we rode on, one of the men rode ahead of me, and as an extra precaution he tied my feet into the stirrups.

Just as it was getting gray in the east I saw a flash of a male mesa. Up on the open hills, the early morning wind bit through my khaki shirt until I was stiff with the cold.

I had guessed long before that our destination was Carib, and all I do not let my mind when we turned into a trail of fresh tracks leading along a line of stakes that could be only Quint's.

Stakes! Numbered stakes! They'd tell just what we wanted to know! As we approached the next one I glanced down to see if I could make out the number. I couldn't, but I caught the next one—1249.

The man beside me noticed that I was reading the number.

"*Gr* (for 'don't')!" he grinned.

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trying the reins of my male to a low bush close to the ground, where I couldn't reach the knot; then they walked confidently toward the old gear-herder, who asked in Spanish what they wanted.

"*Chick-*" said one of the Caribs. "It is cold in the wind and we want someone to warm us." El Futuro does not like to have children in the camp, so we will drink a little here with you."

But the Waikes backed into his doorway, blocking the entrance.

"No *gr* (I have none)," he said. "I am not a child. Quint's men are about that," said one and, shoving the old man to one side, they walked in.

Here was my chance! If I could only get my feet loose, it would be a matter of only a few seconds to stampede the rest of the males and be off at a gallop. Soon there came a shout from the bank. The Caribs had evidently found the male of their race to the door with a big grin on his hand. He glared in my direction and went back into the hall. I knew that they wouldn't stop drinking until the big game was over. I was down on my hands and knees, they would soon be helpless. I had only to be patient and my chance for getting away with the males was good. The first thing was to get my feet loose.

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stomach. Much to my relief, I found that Sequan had hit only with the first stone, and most of the others missed.

The old Waiika and the women behind the two Caribs' hands behind them while Sequan and Diamond stood guard. When the men came back punning and blowing from his pursuers, he seemed very much disappointed that the fight was over. He was so mad that he was funny. He started back and forth in front of the captives, begging Sequan to untie their hands so that he could wreak his vengeance on them for stealing his mules.

Sequan only grinned. He was in the better humor. Diamond and the Waiika women got busy at once with breakfast, and the cocoa cakes and corn-milk cakes, washed down with warm, pasty milk, put the rest of us in good humor, too.

When we were ready to leave, the old goat-herder insisted on going with us to a near-by Waiika village to lay a complete ambush. I don't know just what was said there to the white-haired Cacique, but after the old Waiika had got through talking the Cacique ordered the two Caribs trussed up again to take them to the mouth of the place.

"They will never steal my mules again," said Yarnse with satisfaction.

DIAMOND took us through a short cut to the river. But there was only one small canoe; so it took almost an hour to get the mules across. On the other side was a small hill like the one we had run into on our line the day before. While the men were getting the mules across, I climbed to the top of it to see what the country was like ahead.

Back here on the hill I could see the other hill—Signal Hill, I had named it—near which I knew our crew was cutting the pica. It was not over three miles away. I found that the two Caribs, sticking up just at the beginning of Olanchito Canyon, but between me and the rock there were at least eight or ten miles of swampy land and I knew that we wouldn't get through that country and get our line to Olanchito before Quint made these last nine miles. All the way back to camp I kept thinking of the whole situation and the things I had thought, the more hopeless things looked.

The going was good after we left the hill by the river and we soon reached our camp. All the men crowded around as while we told our story. Neither Mr. White nor McCullough had known what had happened, except that the mules and the four of us were gone when they woke up. They had just thought that the mules had broken out of the corral and that we had gone after them.

When I told about how near Olanchito Quint was, both Mr. White and McCullough were knocked flat. For some minutes neither said a word, but the look in their eyes and the way they looked told me.

They asked all kinds of questions and both estimated that in four days, at the latest, Quint's line would be in Olanchito. A depressed silence fell on the camp.

We all felt so bad about it that I just kept on talking, telling about the fight. When I told about turning the two Caribs over to the headmen in the Waiika village, Mr. White turned to me hopefully.

"How far is that village from here?" he asked. "We might get some more men over there to help with the cutting."

I said it was only about ten miles and Sequan immediately volunteered to go. "And you better tell him to get some more men," said Mr. White. "I said, 'We could put them to cutting through the swamp from here to Finger Rock and the rest of us could go to the mouth of the canyon and start cutting from there.'"

"Where's Finger Rock?" asked McCullough.

"That's a sharp rock that sticks up at the mouth of Olanchito Canyon. You could see it from that signal hill. The Yarnse and Diamond and I climbed up yesterday. I could see it again from the top of another little hill down by the river, where we cut the signal hill."

"Could you see the signal hill from the one by the river?" McCullough asked excitedly.

"Sure!" I said. "It's only about three miles from here."

McCullough looked at Mr. White and Mr. White looked at McCullough; then they let out a wild yell of joy and ran for the mules.

When they came to the mouth of the little hill, McCullough called down for us to bring up the transit. The whole crew caught the hope in his voice and followed Jose-atehi, our head man, to the top of the hill with the old spirit.

"We're going to beat them yet!" grinned McCullough as he grabbed the transit. From Jose-atehi's hands we planted it where he could look straight down the pica at the foot of the hill. Mr. White had a grin on like a Cheshire cat when he ordered the men to start cutting from the transit down to the line.

Little Yarnse took charge of the crew in Sequan's absence. All mappers, mappers-to-be, shovels and with a slash, slash, they went to it.

McCullough turned the telescope first on Finger Rock and then on the hill by the river. After figuring a moment, he turned to Mr. White with the other instrument, we can do it.

"Do what?" I asked.

"Why, you poor man!" he grinned, gesturing with his finger. "You've had the solution to all our troubles ever since you climbed up this hill yesterday and you never let out a peep. We can triangulate from here to Finger Rock and from here to the mouth of the river with the big instrument in about a half day's time. The triangulation will give us the distance from here so we'll know what to number the stake we start with at Finger Rock. While we're running the last lap up to the town you can chain and stake this end of the line, making it complete."

THEN the whole thing was clear to me. We were merely going to make practical use of the old theorem which says that when the length of one side and two angles of a triangle are known, the other two sides can be found. We were going to measure the short distance between the two little hills with the chain while McCullough was measuring the distance from Signal Hill to Finger Rock by calculation. It would save several days' time.

When the men finished cutting to the foot of the hill, Mr. White started them cutting the line between the two hills. When the men stopped at dark, we were more than two-thirds of the way across. The next morning we started out before daylight, and McCullough's big theodolite. Jose-atehi had been sent to Finger Rock the night before so he would be there early in the morning with his observations.

While Mr. White and I finished measuring the line between the two hills, McCullough was making his observations from the summit of Signal Hill. Then he moved to the little hill by the river and measured the angle from there. Just before noon, he was ready with his report. He said that from

Signal Hill to Finger Rock was just 74,533 feet.

With the aid of Mr. White were making the calculations in the book, I took a look through the big telescope. As plain as day, I could see Jose-atehi with the transit on the summit of the hill where the white trail up Olanchito Canyon stood out clearly in the sunlight.

Just then Sequan came in sight; it looked as if he had the whole Indian village in the back of his mind, and women, and children had a macehete. In no time the whole crowd was busy under Sequan's leadership, the women building temporary shelters about the men's camp. The Caribs on the line that McCullough had started for them.

LATE that afternoon Mr. White and McCullough were ready to leave with the pack outfit and part of our old crew, for Finger Rock. They were to continue the line from where Jose-atehi had held his flag in the morning to the town up the canyon.

"We're leaving Sequan and Felipe to help you," said Mr. White. "We both have about nine miles to run but yours is the most important as our line when completed must be continuous from the railroad to the town. Push the both cutters and make your own way, making accurate. If it weren't that I'll have to be up in front when we reach Olanchito, I'd stay and help you. I know you realize that this is our only hope—go it to. Good-bye!"

"Stay with it, old-timer—and good luck!" called McCullough as they rode after the packs.

With the rest of the day we played on. Now after hour, the Waiika pounded away with their macehetes at the tough cane. And the next day was the same, with everyone working at top speed.

The second night, following Mr. White's instructions, we lined up all the new Indians and Sequan paid each of them a half in silver. They looked chased at so much wealth, and were still chattering and jabbering excitedly when I went to bed.

Some time in the night I awoke, roused by a strange, shrilling boom that seemed to fill the air. Slipping into my boots, I stepped out of the tent.

Over at the Indian quarters there was the reflection of a big fire on the trees, and now I knew that the noise was coming from the big temblor or drums.

Just outside the ring of light that lit up a circle of dark faces I stumbled into a crowd. I asked him what the fiesta was about.

"No es fiesta," Diamond said. "It's a talk."

I went down beside him in the shadow and watched the drummers. Outside the ring of men, were the women and children, keeping time with their bare feet. Suddenly it all ceased and a man from the crowd came forward, and as he talked, Diamond translated.

The goat-herder told in a monotonous chant how, long ago, their forefathers had seen the Aguanas Valley from the mountains to the sea, how the old Caciques had led them against all their enemies and never a Waiika had been hurt. He told them how he had come, that no one knew where, with their bodies swarming of fish, and they taught the Waiika to make *chi-cho*, and to provide with the little sticks. When they came, their black men had nothing, and the Cariques of the Waiika had given them land.

Now these black Caribs had become proud and overbearing and they stole

the Waiika's goats and hunted the Waiika's lands.

The Waiika men were men and could wield a macehete against a dozen Caribs. But no more! Seldom did one meet a real man among them.

Yarnseph, who had chased the old goat-herder, then came to my house a man. A man who could fight—the last son of N-wal, the great warrior. Yesterday, Sequan, this son of N-wal, drove the Caribs out of the canyon and past rarely would have killed them all if the Little White Patron had not called to him to stop. Sequan held his hand because his friend asked him to. He said to the Caribs to be just as his headman.

The Caribs are interfering with the work of the white Patron, who are friends of the son of N-wal, and now Sequan has offered the Waiika a chance to pay back the Caribs for their wrongdoing.

Should we show the son of N-wal that we are still men, or shall we let these Caribs, who snarl of fish, get their path cut through to the big town first?

The old man sat up. Around him the crowd stirred and came to the attention and suddenly there arose from the whole crowd a loud shout:

"No-sent! No-sent! We will follow him!"

There were a good many other speeches and then Sequan made one. He spoke very quietly, but when he had finished, they all jumped up and yelled. After that, the dancing began.

It was the old goat-herder's talk that spurred the Waiika on, I'm sure. The third day, late in the afternoon, we started through the cane and came out on the mouth of a little main stream that flowed right past Finger Rock. We found the fish on the top side, where Jose-atehi had held the flag.

We had made almost nine miles of cutting through the worst place we had encountered on the whole line, and we made it in a day. The Waiika were writing the last letters in the notebook, and we heard shouts up the canyon and in a flurry of dust Yarnse arrived with a saddle mule and me and word from Mr. White. He said that the Caribs were as I was through—they would be in the village by sundown.

I WAS off at once. That night went like a thunderbolt, and it was just before sunset when I reached Olanchito and heard at a yell that could have been bent a mile.

There I was standing in the middle of the plaza with one of the firing rocks while Jose-atehi was driving a big white stake. McCullough was at the corner of the plaza, and the Caribs were all there, giving the last signal "O-K." Clustered around, excitedly watching, was every member of that community, including the dogs.

The Abate, a Pised was congratulating Mr. White when I climbed down off my mule, and he shook hands with me, too, in the excitement.

That's all I had to tell—except that Quint's gang didn't arrive until the next day and when he saw the big white stake in the middle of the plaza he just turned on his mule and rode back the way he had come. He said that Quint was a week later.

A week later, Mr. White and I left on muleback for the railroad while McCullough stayed behind to finish the line to Jaita. A few days later, when the crowd he had worked with, and I was sorry to leave.

The whole crowd turned out to see us off, all shouting "Adios, Patronitas." But it was Sequan who said the last little fat Yarnse who sent after me the farewell words that keep on coming over the months and miles.

"Fueron a uno entre (come back next year)," they shouted, as we waved away. "Fueron a uno extra!"

That's the way the jungle always calls to tropical tramp engineers.



"Oh Dad that's what I call a CAR!"



Every boy wants his dad to have the finest car in the neighborhood . . . so when dad drives home a new Buick, sonny's heart swells with pride. In fact, every one in the family feels a thrill of keen delight.

"I tell you," father says, "nothing can touch that new Buick Valve-in-Head Straight Eight Engine. More than half the pleasure in driving is to know that you've got a car with a big, spirited, thoroughly dependable power plant. To me that's one of the finest things about a Buick."

"I like the looks of the new Buick," mother says. "Besides being modern and attractive in appearance, there's an air of distinction about it, too. And I was particularly pleased with Wizard Control when we had that demonstration the other day. Certainly it's easy to drive a car that combines Automatic Clutch, Controlled Free Wheeling and Silent-Second Syncro-Mesh Transmission."

"I'll bet this new Buick cost a heap of money, didn't it dad?" asks sonny.

"No, not as much as people might think," dad replies. "Of course a Buick costs more than a small car—but look at the miles you can get out of a Buick. Why there are Buicks on the road today that have traveled more than 150,000 miles. Almost every one I know that drives a Buick sticks to Buick year after year."

"I'm glad you selected a Buick," mother says. "I know we'll get a lot of pleasure out of it—and it's a car we can all be proud of."



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